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SCS #1130

Thomas F. Torrance.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

REV. JAMES FRASER OF BREA,

A.D. 1639-1698.

(Written by Himself.)

With Introductory Note

BY

REV. ALEXANDER WHYTE, D.D., FREE ST. GEORGE'S,
EDINBURGH;

Also, SHORT SKETCH of FRASER

BY

REV. GUSTAVUS AIRD, D.D., OF CREICH, N.B.

(SECOND THOUSAND.)

Inverness: MELVEN BROTHERS.
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PUBLISHERS' PREFACE.

IN publishing this (which they believe to be the Seventh) Edition of the Life of the Rev. JAMES FRASER of Brea, the Publishers desire to state that it occured to them it might supply a felt want, from the interest created in Fraser by the allusions to him in Dr Alexander Whyte's Edinburgh Weekly Lectures on Bunyan's *Grace Abounding;* also, to his more specific reference to him at the Free Church General Assembly held at Inverness last year.

In addition to Dr Whyte's kind Introductory Note to this Edition, Dr Aird has favoured the Publishers with a Short Sketch of this worthy minister of the Seventeenth Century, which they hope will go far to make the book an interesting and helpful study.

The author Shepherd so often referred to in the Memoirs is the Rev. Thomas Shepard, of Cambridge, New England, whose sermons on the "Parable of the Ten Virgins" were published in 1636-40.

INVERNESS, *July*, 1889.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

BY

Rev. Dr Whyte, of Free St. George's, Edinburgh.

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52 Melville Street,
Edinburgh, *April 1st*, 1889.

Dear Mr Melven,

I AM glad to see that you are about to publish a new edition of Fraser of Brea. In this you are doing a great service to the cause of personal religion in the country. Fraser was one of the ablest men in a time of able men, and his high and abiding value stands in this, that he turned his great intellectual gifts so powerfully to the interests of experimental religion. Fraser is one of my prime favourites; he stands besides Augustine, Bunyan, Baxter, Edwards, Boston, Shepard, and Halyburton, at my elbow.

I wish your new edition great success.

With much regard,
Yours most truly,
ALEXANDER WHYTE.

SHORT SKETCH OF REV. MR FRASER

BY

Rev. Dr. AIRD, of Creich.

MR JAMES FRASER was born at Brea, parish of Resolis, Black Isle, Ross-shire, 29th July, 1639.

His father was proprietor of Brea, a Knight, and brother of Lord Lovat of that time, who was a Covenanter. James succeeded to the estate, was possessed of good talents, well educated, became the subject of a gracious change; his Memoirs are a proof of its genuiness.

Although at first he intended studying law, he eventually gave himself up to the study of Divinity, was licensed and ordained, apparently about 1672, by the Field Presbytery of Moray (that is, the outed ministers in that district who had constituted themselves into a Presbytery). (See Macdonald's, of Nairn, "Covenanters." He was strongly opposed to Prelacy, and was a thorough Presbyterian and Covenanter; suffered much and long for his faithful testimony to the rights of the Redeemer's Crown.

In August, 1673, he was intercommuned along with several eminent ministers and also gentlemen and ladies. Although exposed to all the difficulties connected with intercommuning, yet he had the testimony of his conscience that he was following his Master, and had the privilege of being in the company of Hog of Kiltearn, McKillegan of Fodderty, and Donald Cargill, with many others of a kindred spirit.

In 1677 he was imprisoned in Edinburgh, brought before a Committee of Council, and sent to the Bass, where he suffered severely, but enjoyed much of the Lords presence.

In 1679, with others, he was taken from the Bass and imprisoned in Edinburgh, but liberated and enjoyed freedom until 1681, during which time he continued wandering but preaching every Lord's-day.

In 1681 he was sent by the Council to Blackness Prison, was at length liberated upon bond to leave Scotland for London.

The ministers of Inverness after the Revolution kept their charges and livings by qualifying to Government. Although one of the Episcopal ministers who had qualified died in 1691, yet the magistrates would not suffer the charge to be declared vacant, and on the 21st June of that year all the avenues to the church were beset with armed men, so that no minister might enter; and when Duncan Forbes of Culloden, father of the Lord President, sought to open the doors, he was thrust back and struck. He and others on this account represented the case to the Council, and in August, 1691, Leven's Regiment was sent north to protect the well-affected in obeying the law; but for ten years thereafter no Presbyterian minister could be settled there (see Shaw's "Province of Moray," page 379). Mr McKillegan, Fodderty, because of his ailments was obliged to reside in Inverness, to be near a physician, and preached there until his death, 8th June, 1689.

Mr Fraser of Brea also preached there for some time, but was not admitted minister (see Shaw, page 359). He was eventually admitted minister of Culross, where he finished his course about 1698 or 1699.

He was assisted at a Communion in Culross in 1698, very shortly before his death, by the celebrated Boston of Ettrick, then a young man.

Fraser and his associates suffered, laboured, and bore testimony for truth and religious liberty. May we, their descendants, be kept from provoking the Lord to withdraw them. "Stand ye in the ways and see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein."

GUSTAVUS AIRD.

FREE CHURCH MANSE,
CREICH, *July*, 1889.

THE PREFACE.

THE design of publishing this part of the works of the worthy Author, is to do honour to his memory, and to gratify severals, whose savour of piety hath indeared it to them; of whom we might mention some of high distinction. If it be asked why it was not published sooner, there is no other reason to be given than that it was a loss, and that better now than not at all. By the Dedication to Mr Thomas Ross (a singularly pious minister in the North), the Author seems to give permission to publish it, so that the world may be fully satisfied that the work is genuine, being copied from that writ by his own hand, of the truth of which they may rest assured, as can be attested by several ministers still living. The reason why Mr Thomas Ross did not cause to publish it probably was, that he was at the time he received it in prison at Tayne, and died there in prison, or soon thereafter. Such as had a tender regard for the Author wished that this had been published at the same time with the first part of his treatise on faith: particularly this would help to clear up that, as to some things dark, and not so very obvious, at least till it was thought proper to publish the second part of that treatise. It was and is the wish of many, that the rest of his life, particularly after his settlement at Culross had been got; for surely he wrote diaries during life, but, after all the search possible, this could not be found. This now published is, however, very valuable, and will be so esteemed by the truly serious and judicious, being a very rational account of conversion, as to beginning, progress, and issue, and of the operation of the Spirit of God on the heart: and such an account of faith as cannot but please those who love it, and may, by the blessing of God, help to engage to it such as hitherto had it not in reality. There is perhaps no other performance gives a more distinct account of a supernatural work of grace; and it is thought not to be unseasonable at this juncture for reviving piety and the exercise of grace, and convicting those who make a jest of these serious matters. The first eight chapters, dedicated to Mr Thomas Ross, were allowed by himself to be published; what follows is judged to be of good use, and therefore now published with the rest.

DEDICATION BY THE AUTHOR

TO

Mr THOMAS ROSS.

Reverend Sir,

"I HAVE thought the disregarding of the Lord's providences to be one common great sin, not only among open enemies, but among professed friends of Christ, Isa. v. 12; Psal. xxviii. 5. All God's ways, being wisdom and goodness, are worthy of observation; but especially those wherewith ourselves are exercised (as having most certainty and fuller information of them, and concerning ourselves most) are much to be observed, Prov. xxiii. 26, and these providences that concern our spiritual estate most of any, wherein the Lord hath appeared more eminently. Exod. xii. 42, 'A night much to be observed unto the Lord,' etc. I have in nothing been more refreshed, quickened, and edified, than by hearing and reading of the spiritual experiences of others of the Lord's people, Heb. xii. 1, and in nothing more comforted and sanctified than by a serious recalling to mind of the Lord's dealings with me. Three ways doth the Lord reveal himself—by His Word, by His works of creation, and by His works of providence—and 'tis man's happiness to know Him thus revealed, John xvii. 3. And these are the several glasses through which the invisible God is seen, John iv. 16. God doth not reveal Himself to any, that this might be kept under a bushel, for the manifestation of the Spirit is given to profit withal, and we find the Lord's people in Scripture to be much in recounting to others their own experiences, and God's dealing with them: 'Come, and I will tell you what the Lord hath done for my soul,' Psal. lxvi. 16. As also, the blessed effect this has had on others: 'For this shall every one that is godly pray unto the Lord, in a time when He may be found,' Psal. xxxii. 6. The consideration of this, with the desires of others, and my willingness to show my thankfulness unto the Lord, by an acknowledgment of these His favours at least, and being some way hopeful that it might profit others, and to provoke those exercised more nobly, to manifest the Lord's goodness unto them; I say, these things have put me out to this work at this time (O that the Lord would accept it of my hand;) even to record some passages of divine providence manifested towards me while here in my pilgrimage.

"I have dedicated them to you, sir, because I hold myself much bound unto you; and some little thing of this nature, whereby I might kyth my gratitude, I thought incumbent upon me to do. I looked on you likewise as one who would with more moderation and discretion pass over the faults and weaknesses therein than others, to whom notwithstanding I owe much love; as likewise, you was the occasion of my undertaking this work at this time in a more especial way; and, therefore, I looked for a more kindly entertainment to this child from you, who had such influence in bringing it to the world, than from others. I believe you will not fail my expectation; make what use you please of it, and either censure, correct or approve, divulge or hide it, as you shall think fit. I wish you profit hereby, and am in Christ,

"Reverend Sir,
"Your loving friend,
"JAMES FRASER."

I shall reduce what I have met with to these eight heads: (1) What hath been the Lord's carriage to me before I knew anything of God, or had so much as the form of religion. (2) Some steps of God's providence while the Lord was drawing me to Himself; or some preparation-work to my conversion, while my heart was not fully changed, but only had some appearance of godliness. (3) Some things concerning my conversion, the time and manner, and what immediately followed. (4) Of the sad and long decay that happened thereafter. (5) Relate some things touching my recovery out of that decay. (6) Some things that happened immediately after this recovery for the space of four or five years. (7) Some things relating to my present condition, and some things I have observed in my experience. (8) Some particular mercies I have met with from the Lord at several occasions.

MEMOIRS
OF THE
REV. JAMES FRASER OF BREA.

CHAP. I.

TOUCHING SOME THINGS THAT HAPPENED TO ME FROM MY BIRTH TILL I WAS NINE YEARS OLD.

1. I WAS born in the North of Scotland, in 1639, July 29th, and was not like to live, but the Lord healed me; for the evil humours broke out in boils great and numerous, so that I was very wholesome thereafter; my disposition was sullen, and I loved not to be dawted, nor to wear gaudy clothes; nor had I any wise tales like other children, so that I gave no occasion to my parents to repeat them, as parents usually do with fondness: for though my parents were fond enough of their children, yet my temper was so peevish, that I was no dawtie; only at school I learned well, though now and then I stayed away.

2. Even at this time I showed plainly that I had a will to do evil; for the seeds of wickedness did spring up, and appeared in many vicious, childish tricks: by all which the necessity of regeneration was evident, and that by nature we are under the power of sin and Satan; "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right," Prov. xx. 11. And these were all my preparations and dispositions for good.

3. Yet the Lord was doing me good all the while. I overpass common mercies, and mention one that was very remarkable. My mother being obliged to come south, to be out of the way of a cruel enemy who prosecuted her, lived with a relation in a burgh-town on the coast-side: I was very unruly, and therefore kept under some awe and restraint from wandering abroad when I pleased; but this increased my desire to ramble the more. At a time I slipped out, unknown to any, to a garden where was a deep well; when once I got out of doors, I ran as hard as ever I could, and, not taking heed where I went, I fell in a by-path which carried me directly to the well before spoken of, open above, and overgrown with grass, which did hide the water from me; so that ere I knew, I fell over head in the well, the water being very deep; only my hands laid hold on the grass that did grow on the sides of the well. Here I continued for a good space, and would, no doubt, have drowned, if God had not sent some to my relief; for he that was appointed to wait on me, not knowing whither I went, the mere providence of God led him out to seek me in the garden; and when coming to the further end of it, and despairing to find me, went back with intention to seek me in the town, which if he had done, I had perished for ever: but, the Lord directing him in his back-coming to the well, he cast his eyes and perceived a hand lying on the grass, which extremity had caused me to do, and, looking more narrowly, found it was I; and so, addressing himself to my relief, with much ado pulled me out of the water, even ready to expire, and unable to help myself: and after the water was poured out of my mouth, and I had slept a while, I was as well as ever, through the wonderful goodness of God. Oh that I may walk worthy of this kindness, and that I may be preserved to do Him pleasure and service! This happened to me during my first appearance in the world.

CHAP. II.

RELATING SOME THINGS CONCERNING GOD'S DEALINGS WITH ME WHILE UNDER SOME COMMON WORK OF THE SPIRIT AND NOT FULLY CONVERTED, FROM THE TIME I WAS NINE YEARS OLD TILL I WAS SEVENTEEN.

ERE I was really and fully converted, and drawn to God in Christ, I advanced four steps; and in every one of them I had undoubtedly rested, and so, missing of Christ, had undoubtedly perished, if I had not been beaten out of them: but the Lord seeing me ready to rest in these, made them all to break under me, until at last He revealed His Son Jesus to my soul, whom to know is life eternal.

STEP I.—Was the getting some prayers by heart, and saying of them in a formal way morning and evening; so that now I was complete as I thought: the Lord was likewise then drawing my heart to what was good; for when I said my prayers morning and evening, and did not slight them, then had I very much peace and comfort of heart; and when I omitted them, I was vexed in my conscience. Sometimes for a while together I would omit seeking of God through sloth, and then would I be terrified with fearful dreams, the voice of which I thought was a rebuke for omitting of my prayers; and for a while thereafter I would be very zealous; and, when I did any kind of duty, I would not be troubled at all; and what evil soever came upon me, I judged it to be for the omission of my duties, which I looked upon as my greatest sin. By these means, as the most meet and fit for me then, did the Lord seek to cause me follow good, and to eschew evil.

But this continued not long, for I decayed; and so thereby I was beaten from this, as I was from other resting places. The means and occasions were, (1) Those who should have overseen me grew careless; they let me alone, and took no account of me at all, but entrusted me to others; and therefore, having no king I did what was right in my own eyes, Judg. xvii. 6. (2) The Lord, after He had several times drawn me to the yoke by fearful dreams and some small convictions, finding then that the impressions of these things wore off me, that I slipped out of the collar again, and, not intending that this should be my rest, did not trouble me; and I not having changes, but being let alone, let God and duty alone, Psal. lv. 19. (3) Because it was but common grace, and my soul being not united to Christ the fountain, hence anything I had vanished and perished, John xv. 4. (4) Several lusts not being destroyed, but kept, notwithstanding of all my duties, especially pleasures, did in the end choke any good that was sown, Luke viii. 14. (5) Evil company did me likewise much harm; and, through continual converse with them, I was transformed into their image, 1 Cor. v. 6 and xv. 33. (6) Because, if this had not broken under me, I would have rested here, and so, coming short of Christ, would have perished, Mic. ii. 10. (7) Because I got not full rest and contentment in God, and, wanting it in Him, I behoved to go out to my lusts for it at last, Matt. xii. 44. The unclean spirit goeth out wanting rest, and finding none: hence he returns. (8) Because my decay came by degrees, and not all at once; and therefore still I thought I would overtake it and therefore said, "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber:" and the longer I continued, the more indisposed I grew, and greater difficulties I found, Prov. xxiv. 33, 34. Through these means mainly it was that I fell from this state, so that I neglected duty altogether, and at last did so without a challenge, and gave but too much way to other sins, until God used new means, and made another assault, which He did shortly thereafter, thus:

Step II.—Was the zealous performance of some duties, especially prayer. Before, I had nothing but conned lessons, but now I could bake my own bread; and I know not how and wonder still at it, that, having so little knowledge, I could yet be able to conceive a prayer, and continue therein for some reasonable time, and not only so, but to delight in it likewise, and that in a greater measure than I did formerly. The occasion was this: My father was sick and like to die, and then sent for me, having provided a chaplain to the house, who was to have the oversight of me likewise. He was a godly, tender-hearted man, but none of the deepest reach: and his zeal appeared still the more, in that there was nothing among ourselves but either ignorance, profanity, or formality; while he seemed to follow the power of godliness, for which he was generally hated and despised. He was a great enemy to vice, such as drunkenness, Sabbath-breaking, and swearing, ills common enough in the family and country; and being continued our chaplain after my father's death (for about that time he died), he set himself to spread the sincere knowledge of God, and to do good to others; and for this cause, instructed, reproved, and set them upon the practice of duties. I coming home, was delivered over to him, and to his oversight, which was a great grief to me, not relishing his strictness. The first night, I would have gone to bed without prayers; but, as I was putting off my clothes, he marked my design, and commanded I should fall down on my knees and recommend myself to God e'er I went to bed, which I obeyed, and said over my evening prayer I had before got by heart, he reading his book in the meantime.

When I was in my bed, the consideration of my new yoke did put me out to weep bitterly. The man was lean and hard-favoured, and kept at a great distance from me, and was very precise, an humour I was never before acquainted with; as likewise, I was secretly fearing the imposition of greater burdens upon me. I comforted myself by a little vent I gave my sorrows.

But to return. One day as we were talking more familiarly than ordinarily we were wont, he desired to hear my prayers. I thereupon repeated both morning and evening prayers I had learned formerly. To which, he giving attention, and knowing both by the matter, and my way of repeating them, that they were a conned lesson, which I had some way learned from others, he told me that, unless I had got the Spirit of God to teach me to pray, I could not go to heaven; and that all other prayers proved ineffectual. And, thereupon, a while after, he in all his exhortations to me addressed to speak against set forms of prayer, and pressed us that were children to express the pure and real conceivings of our own hearts, though we should but utter five sentences at a time, and that this, coming from the heart, was better and more acceptable to God than many and long prayers taught us by others. He likewise taught us the principles of religion, the meaning of the Belief, the Lord's Prayer, and Ten Commands; and had a very strict eye over us, correcting us soundly for cursing, swearing, lying, and Sabbath-breaking; and observed our ways narrowly, and took a strict account of us, both as to what we learned, and of our practices, but especially of me; so that, in a short time, through the Lord's blessing, I attained to some competent measure of knowledge, and left my former ways, and set about secret and public duties, being about eleven years at this time; and use made duties easy; and the peace I had in them, with the hopes of a reward, and the influence of a natural conscience, made me delight in them, so as in a short time I went about them no longer by constraint, but did them of mine own accord and willingly, and sometimes would exceed what was enjoined me. Every day, morning and evening, I would bow my knee, and read some portion of Scripture, and would pray a conceived prayer at some length, and with some earnestness, but had no spiritual exercise, and had no communication with God: I likewise began to comply with my pedagogue better, and to love him better; and he seeing me profit both in letters and godliness, was more kindly to me: nor could he be said for all his strictness to be rigid to me, insomuch that for the space of a whole year I remember not that I was twice whipt, and one time was for swearing and playing at cards. During the time which he was with me, being a year and a half, I learned the most of my grammar; but this being not my rest, I fell grievously away from all this profession and practice.

2. The steps of this decay were, (1) Wantonness and lightness in time of public prayers, through a foolish light humour, and the tentations of others: for I studied not heart-reformation. (2) More slight performance of duties when I durst not omit them: God suffered this to go with me, and therefore, (3) I would sometimes omit them altogether, when out of the knowledge of my governor. (4) I began to play on the Sabbath-day with others, for which I got a memorandum: for one day being the Lord's day, the children and I were playing some childish rogueries; which our governor (good man) hearing, calls us up, and then very seriously endeavours to persuade us and convince us of the sin of Sabbath-breaking, and the danger thereof, and gave us a large exhortation, and thereafter enjoined us all to go to our knees and confess our sins to God, and seek pardon thereof, which we obeyed; and for my part, though at first I was constrained to it, yet I was serious both in acknowledging of guilt, and seeking pardon of sin: and, when we had done, we were dismissed, being first exhorted not to do the like again; which produced a reformation in us all for some time. (5) Through mine own evil nature, which was never as then mortified, and the counsel of others that were my companions, I despised my governor or pedagogue, and did join with others in afflicting him by approbation and desire, though I durst not do it so openly. And I remember, one time he being out, an old soldier who was pitifully cut and mangled in the face had come to the house, with whom we got some way acquaint, and put him in the pedagogue's chamber with a drawn sword in his hand, and an old red gown on his back, a candle burning before him,

and sitting in a chair with a table on which he leaned, with a Greek New Testament in his hand on which he seemed to read; and all this, that, when the good man would enter the chamber, the strangeness of the spectacle might affright him, and that we might have matter of scorning him; and for this cause we followed him as he was coming to his chamber after supper; but, when he came in, he suspected that it was a trick, and went to the soldier and took the sword out of his hand, and, putting him out of doors, he made him discover all those that had a hand in it, whom the next day thereafter he made to crave pardon publicly. O how mighty are folks when they walk with the Lord! and how little do their adversaries gain of them! (6) I proceeded from this to a more open violation of the Sabbath, and played with the servants at the club on the Lord's day, from six o'clock till it was nine, my tutor in the meantime, I know not how, either remitting in his zeal, or hoping when we were more settled in our affairs (for we were to go south on the next day) to rectify things. (7) When I came south, my pedagogue became more rigid to me, and whipt me more frequently, I confess deservedly; and I turned to hate him, and became stubborn, and would do nothing for him. My father being dead, I was but too much countenanced by those with whom I was, who would not suffer him to take such course with me as he would and I merited; so that things came this length, that I openly reviled him, and avowedly omitted duty. At last he was put away. (8) He once being put away, I became worse, and did no good at all; I neglected duty sometimes for many days together. (9) I was much given to lying and made an ordinary practice of it, so that I could scarce speak a true word. (10) I turned to mock godliness sometimes, though this did not proceed so much from an habit, and nature, and inclination, as from the tentations of others, whom, by this means, I studied to please. (11) My conscience at last became seared and insensible, so that I did all this with little or no remorse. (12) Swearing little petty oaths of *Faith*, *Conscience*, and *Truth*, was ordinary with me. (13) I broke out at last in the dreadful sin of blasphemy, which I uttered with my tongue, playing one afternoon at cards, being about twelve years of age. (14) I stole from my mother's waiting man five shillings sterling while I lay with him; and, being suspected for it, I was denying it, but it was proven against me, and I was with shame made to restore it. (15) I cursed myself knowingly, in denying a thing which yet I knew to be true. (16) I became so wicked, as not content to omit prayer on the Sabbath-day, and to talk idly as others did, I played the whole day at the dice, contrary to my light, and my conscience even in the meantime accusing and condemning me. (17) I was almost mine own murderer; for being grievously awed at the grammar school, and ordinarily whipt whether I deserved it or not, and desirous to be rid of this grievous bondage, I knew no way but to procure a sickness to myself: and, for this cause, I went out to the cross and bought green fruits, and did eat nothing but that, and would oftentimes go naked all night, which procured me a flux, which I desired, and which continued with me for two whole years almost, which was near to have cost me my life; for, through grief, and ill diet, and ill guiding, I took a bloody flux, in which I lay for two days, which was all the sickness I ever had. In a word, I was clean gone, and nothing all this time was dealing with me save only some ineffectual checks and movings upon my heart now and then.

3. This decay did proceed from the same causes with the former; yet I remarked these five things to have had most influence on me: (1) I prayed, but endeavoured not to take away my sins: my prayers never killed my lusts, and therefore my lusts killed prayer: like many now, that profess, and yet sin on still; that fear the Lord, and serve their idols. (2) My governor decayed in his zeal, through want of good company, and through neglect of private prayer in which I marked him deficient, and through too much familiarity with the domestics that did blunt his zeal; and I think, seeing my wickedness grow upon him and overmaster him, he de-

spaired of doing me good: he slept and Satan came in and sowed tares, Matt. xiii. 25. (3) Because, when he was gone, none took care of me; and, "having no king, I did what was good in mine own eyes." None did reprove or correct me for my faults, nor did look on my soul at all, or put me out to duty, but gave me loose reins; and, old Jehoiadah being dead or gone, "I did evil in the sight of the Lord," Judg. xxi. 25; 2 Chron. xxiv. 2, 17, 18. (4) Because not followed with terrors and convictions, peace and ease did me ill; Prov. i. 33; Jer. li. 39. (5) I found that evil company did me much harm; I learned their ways; they hardened and encouraged me in an ill course, and drew me from the Lord: for in my greatest decays, I mark this, that I was trysted with carnal, godless company.

4. Yet, notwithstanding of this, I was not altogether left of God, for now and then I was in some good mood, and the Spirit of God would strive and draw me contrary to my inclinations, so as now and then I would pray and read, and be affected: and this good did proceed from these causes: (1) Some extraordinary sharp convictions from the Lord on my conscience, that would put me out to prayer and to get peace; which storm being over, I cared not for prayer any more, Acts ii. 37; Psalm lxvi. 3. (2) Outward and grievous afflictions at school, by reason of the tyrannical rigidity of a certain schoolmaster I had, who delighted in the scourging of children, and would ofttimes pick quarrels with me and scourge me for little or no fault at all; so that every day almost I was sure to be scourged, carry and do as I liked; which made my life grievous and a burden to me: and this in the anguish of my soul would cause me to pour out a prayer, Psalm lxxviii. 35; Isa. xxvi. 12, 16. (3) Sometimes our teachers would instruct us to pray; and then an exhortation had some influence on me, and would put me in some frame, 2 Chron. xxiv. 2. (4) I would out of conceit sometimes pray. I lingered on in this condition three or four years, until I went South again, in order to my going to the college.

Step III.—1. I was then going about the form of all manner of duties both public and private, joined likewise with reformation and zeal. Before, I was only taken up in prayer, but now I made conscience of all duties; and therefore meditated, read the Scriptures frequently, and kept the Sabbath very strictly, and reading of good books: and I left off all my old sins and ways, such as lying, swearing, and made conscience of all moral virtues; I left my gaming, my idle talk, and became very temperate; and if I at any time failed, I would fall down on my knees, and beg the Lord's mercy. Yea so zealous was I, that I endeavoured to gain others, and would reprove them for their looseness: and this produced in me some love to the godly, so that I seemed both to myself and others a new man, and everything to become new; and yet a stranger to Christ, and lying fast bound in a natural condition. But the occasion of this reformation and great change was this:—One Sabbath-day afternoon, being then fifteen years of age, I read on a book called the "Practice of Piety," concerning the misery of a natural man, the torments of hell, and the blessedness of a godly man, and some directions for a godly life: the Lord so wrought, and my heart was therewith so affected and drawn, that without more ado, I henceforth resolved to become a new man, and to live not only a harmless life, but a godly and devout life, and to turn my back upon all my old ways, and utterly to forsake them, and thereupon immediately to set upon the practice of duties. And in this way and condition I had marvellous sweetness and peace, judging and esteeming myself really converted; and would ordinarily in my prayers thank the Lord for giving me His good Spirit; and thought with myself, If I would but continue in this condition to the end, I should undoubtedly be saved. And, in a word, I was a complete Pharisee; and for the benefit of others, I will describe the frame of my spirit under this dispensation.

2. I had the very characters of a formal Pharisee; for, (1) I looked only to the outward letter of the law, and

did endeavour an outward conformity thereto; and if I went about the outward form of duty, I sought no more, 2 Tim. iii. 5; Amos iv. 4. (2) I judged myself rather by the length and multitude of my duties, more than by any other thing in them, Matt. vi. 7. (3) I rested in duties as the end, and made them not the means to bring me to Christ: I looked on them as *opus operatum;* and, therefore, when I did seek or pray for any spiritual mercy, it was not the things I sought I was mostly taken up with: which did evidence itself to me in this, That when I prayed for any mercy, when I got it not, nor any promise for obtaining it, yet was satisfied; like these, Isa. i. 15. (4) Whenever I sinned, I satisfied God and my own conscience by doubling my duties, and gave them to the Lord as satisfaction: and then, as though the blood of Christ had been applied, there ensued peace; like those (Mic. vi. 7) that would give "rivers of oil for the sin of their soul;" and these (Amos iv. 4) who would, when they transgressed, go to Gilgal and offer sacrifice; and the whore, Prov. vii. 14; Matt. xxiii. 14. (5) Hence my duties did never put away my sins, nor did tend to this, but I "served the Lord and my idols;" and, if there was any reformation, it was but the outside of the platter that was cleansed: but I neither saw, nor did hate, nor strive against, nor overcome any heart-corruptions; they never troubled me, 2 Kings xvii. 33; Zeph. i. 5. (6) I was utterly ignorant of the mystery of the Gospel; I neither knew nor studied faith nor the promises, nor justification by imputed righteousness, being altogether ignorant of that, Rom. x. 3. (7) I was more troubled for the want of holiness and the neglect of duties than for the want of Christ Himself; and loved Christ's benefits better than Christ Himself; I indeed returned, but not to the Most High, Hos. vii. 16. (8) I hated profane persons, and loved civil men that had any form of religion; but did not relish the most strict, especially such who expressed the power of godliness, John xv. 18. (9) Heaven was not sweet to me, but I ever thought on it with grief and aversion, in respect of the constant uninterrupted spiritual exercises they had there, and the want of carnal comforts. I loved a kingdom in this world, Matt. xx. 20, 21. (10) My conscience notwithstanding after a little profession was unsatisfied, and there was a worm knawing at the root of all this; and I could not be quit of this assault, that for all this I might and would probably go to hell. I had no great security from all my duties, and my fears were still alive; and aye I found, the more I did, they increased, Matt. xix. 16; the young man cried still out, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (11) Whatever I did was rather to satisfy conscience, than from love to God, who was a terror to me, and whom I could not otherwise represent to myself than as an angry judge, and an enemy, whom I was still troubled to satisfy. By all which it appears I had no saving grace.

3. I decayed from this and fell, and was beaten off it through these means. (1) My pleasures, vanities, and evil company, to which I was not mortified, did draw my heart away, Hos. iv. 11; Luke viii. 14. (2) Sins did break out such as cursing, and swearing, and carding, and that very frequently; so as I could not get comfort in duties. And this produced a despair in me of the works of my hand, and this weakened me; my duties were not able to bear up the weight of my sins; and, therefore, sighing, I went backward; and seeing there was no hope, and loving idols, I said I would follow them, Jer. ii. 28; Lam. i. 9. (3) Duties through process of time began to be a burden to me, especially when they gave me not full satisfaction nor peace: I was wearied in the greatness of my way, and with labouring in the smoke, and found no end in the travail of my soul, and therefore gave over; for this thought remained secretly in my heart, that I would go to hell when all was done. I was indeed wearied and laden with them, Mal. i. 13, "What a weariness is in God's service?" Why? Chap. iii. 14, "What profit is it that we have kept His ordinance?" (4) By a certain providence I was

brought to see the vanity of all this, which made me seek to another mountain for rest; and, finding none, I turned a seeker, though not in judgment, yet really and truly in practice; which made me despair not only of being happy by the works of the law which I had done, but even by these which I was to do; and so put from seeking it afterwards that way. And this was my last step and dispensation of providence I was trysted with.

Step IV.—Was, being beat out of all forms, I turned a seeker, had no principle, but lived in hopes that God would reveal Himself to me; sometimes I prayed; I had some comfort in doing duties with any affection and life, which sometimes I would win unto. The occasion was this; I was before this a formalist; duties were my Christ, which I began (through my prevailing lusts and outward tentations, and withal some secret suspicions of their influence to justify me) gradually to be remiss in: yet I left not the principle; for the principle remained (notwithstanding I fell short in my practice) that if I could abstain from my ordinary sins, keep the Sabbath-day, pray morning and evening, and do every known duty, I should be saved. And this continued until, being left by my mother in a religious family, I by providence took up a book called the "Seventeen False Rests;" wherein I found the vanity of formality in duties discovered very plainly, and some other pitches and lengths I had not attained to. I was afterwards confirmed in this by reading the "Confession of Faith," where it saith "That though one should form his life never so exactly, according to nature and morality, without Christ he could not be saved." This was enough; and the Spirit seconding it, convinced me I was quite wrong first, and had never known what true grace was: and besides, despaired ever of myself to come to that estate of grace: all my refuges of lies were shaken, and that which many sermons for a long time could not do, now in a moment three lines did.

2. The frame of my spirit might be thus described: 1*st*,

I thought all my duties, and all I could do, insufficient to save me, though as yet I saw not so clearly the insufficiency of duties; and therefore did easily conclude, that all this time I was in an unconverted condition, and, if I died without a further change than yet I felt, I should undoubtedly be damned. *2ndly*, I thought there was a certain state and blessed condition to which all the converted, and such as had the Lord's Spirit, had come, and betwixt me and which there was a very great cloud; and that I was, as it were, locked up from this. *3dly*, I had some hopes that God might do me good, and bring me to this state ere I died. *4thly*, I had in the meantime some sharp and terrible convictions for particular sins, but not for my evil nature, and which did wear away without any remaining effect. *5thly*, I had no principle, nor rested in anything, but looked for some divine manifestation and extraordinary revelation to my soul. *6thly*, I prayed sometimes when the Spirit moved, and sometimes not; yet had no peace except when I prayed with life and affections; and then, though I rested not in this, yet would it comfort me. *7thly*, I thought those that were regenerate lived a life of perpetual comfort and glory, and always performed duties with life; and, when I would arrive at this pitch, I would judge myself converted. And I further thought, that there was a marvellous way of attaining to this; I looked for the kingdom of heaven to come with observation. *8thly*, I condemned all men; for seeing the unsuitableness of their lives to their principles, and their great carnality, and hearing their fruitless complaints and confessions and doubts, and expressing nothing of God's love, I thought all came short, and lived in an empty form. *9thly*, I thought them the best preachers who preached most methodically, and with greatest natural quickness, but understood not spiritual preachers. *10thly*, I ordinarily slighted duties, and fell in outbreakings of swearing, lying, and idle talking, and carding; pleasures were my idol to which I was not mortified; I had no principle nor centre.

11*thly*, I mourned for sin, not because it offended God, but because of the consequents of it; and this made me conclude I was not sincere; and I thought, if once I could win to hate sin because it offended God, that then I was sincere. I drove this trade for the space of three years almost, wherein I was settled in nothing but in a waiting and seeking condition.

3. During the time I was under the former dispensations, I was trysted with some wonderful providences, wherein much of the power and goodness of God, in delivering me from terrible temptations to despair, did visibly appear. They were these: First, A year and a half after I had blasphemed, being in my bed, the thoughts of that grievous sin came to my mind, and that with such horror as made me tremble with an unaccustomed fear; this was the first sting of sin. I essayed to pray, but could not get my mouth opened; there did a number of blasphemies and cursings run in my mind with great horror and against my will, which I thought was like the devil in me. I had not knowledge, and therefore was the more troubled; for I was not fourteen years of age then. The more these thoughts did run in and present themselves to my mind, my horror was increased, insomuch that the horror of it was so great, that at last it became intolerable; and then, in my extremity and in great anguish of spirit, the Lord pitied me, and opened my mouth to pray for help, which I did most affectionately, and with great liberty and abundance of tears, which did by a secret virtue charm and calm my confused soul; for now did I by this conceive that I was not quite forsaken of God, as likewise the terrible apprehensions I had of God began to cease, and I slept till the next day: but my troubles began the next day again, and I thereby was made more devout, so as I read on godly books; and, casting the book at random, the first passage that I met with was this, "When Satan casts in blasphemous thoughts in thy heart, be not discouraged; for they are not thine, but Satan's." Here was a well of water; though my eyes at

first could not see it so full, yet it did somewhat help me, and by it now I perceived much of God's condescending nature. In process of time, when I began to be less troubled, these blasphemous thoughts did wear away, and so did my trouble likewise.

A second wonderful and merciful Providence was this. In the time I was a seeker, and heard them speaking of the sin against the Holy Ghost, and that it was unpardonable, I began presently to have some weak suspicions that I had sinned that sin, when I had recalled my blasphemy to mind; but concluded nothing certainly, because I knew not what that sin might be. And all this time it was my exercise to inquire at such as had knowledge, what that sin against the Holy Ghost might be, but was not satisfied, and I had no books that spake of that sin at all, and some places of Scripture in the Evangelists that did treat of that sin could not solve my scruple; but, the longer I continued, the more my fears increased. At last I took up a Concordance to seek the Lord's mind in His word anent it, and for this cause I looked the word Sin; at last I was made to read, Heb. x. 26, "If we sin wilfully," etc. I read them at length, and I thought I was stricken therewith as with thunder, and continued amazed and speechless for a while; for I thought it was clear and past doubt I should go to hell, seeing I had sinned against knowledge, and wilfully, not being constrained thereto; and I could not say but it did proceed from passion for my bad luck at the cards. So that, for the space of three days, this temptation was a very sad exercise to me. Now, said my heart to me, dost thou not at last see thy doom clearly revealed? What need more witnesses? Then did I endeavour to pray, but was beaten back, because I thought it was in vain, seeing there is no more sacrifice for sin; yet I prayed. That word, I remember, in the midst of my despair came to mind, "Abraham in hope believed against hope;" and therefore I thought, though there was no hope, yet I should hope against hope. This was the only thing that did uphold me then. I drove heavily and heartlessly like Pharaoh's chariots, because I had no hope; although it stood me very much, I multiplied prayers, but they did not heal me; I remembered Esau, who wept until he got a blessing. And did Esau, said I, prevail with his earthly father by his importunity, notwithstanding that he could not help him, so as in the end to get some blessing. and cannot the power and wisdom of God help me, though I cannot conceive how? His thoughts are above mine; This staid me something, and withal put me to multiply my prayers, and to increase in importunity. But, after I was for three days fearfully shaken, and having communicated my case to none, the Lord did at last grant some deliverance, and was pleased to calm my soul, not by removing the cause, but by restraining Satan, and ceasing Himself to let out His hand against me. I got a negative peace that I was not troubled, but lived as I was wont for a year after that, until the same temptation occurred again. 'Tis the Lord that raises the wind and storm, and that calms them again; and, oh what a mercy and power, that ever my conscience should be clear of such a storm! it is yet a wonder unto me. If He give peace, who can trouble? Let never any despair after me, though he were certain of hell; the gladdest word I could hear was, that my sins were pardonable, and that there was a possibility to be saved. In no case man is to despair; God can help in every case.

A third wonderful Providence happened to me a year thereafter, upon the same occasion. One Sabbath-day, at night, I had made some vows in my last trouble, that I would seek God more diligently than I had done; but when the Lord's arrows were out of my reins, I forgot what I promised, and turned as bad as ever, being seduced with carnal company at the college. But the Lord gave me an awakening: for the sermon I had heard, being a relation of some under terrors of conscience, and their sad condition, had some impressions on my spirit, so as by nine o'clock, in my bed, recalling to mind my old sin of blasphemy, I thought there was much malice in it and despite. Upon which, for the space of some hours, a more violent storm did break out than any I had ever felt. I looked on myself as one that had undoubtedly sinned unpardonably. I saw in God's countenance terror, wrath, hatred, and vengeance; and some of my natural enmity against the Lord did break out likewise; so that I struggled, murmured, and fretted against God, like the damned in hell, for suffering me to sin unpardonably. Despair and want of hope is terrible; I was as if in hell; no visible thing did uphold me, only the secret power of God. I was in an hourly expectation when Satan should come and take me away; and it was beaten upon me with a mighty impression, that I was delivered to the devil. It was impossible for me to pray: for in approaching to God I approached to my torment. I sought with sleep to pass away that night, the sorrowfullest that I ever endured, and so to wear away my horrors, and hoped the morning would some way cheer me; but I could not sleep, my horror still increased, and hopelessness was the sting of all my evils. It entered into my head once to put hands in myself; but this temptation did not take, nor singe so much as a hair of my head, but looked on it as a mad thing to torment myself before the time; it was hell I feared, and should I then run to it? At last, after much tossing, and hardly praying, it pleased God somewhat to allay my horror with these considerations, which I thought some good spirit suggested unto me. 1*st*, Thou knowest not how thou sinned, nor the frame of thy heart at that time, whether thou didst utter these words of blasphemy in rage, or out of unwatchful folly; and wilt thou then condemn thyself upon uncertainties? This was rational, but did not calm my heart; it, like cold water cast on a burning, did for a time ease it, but did not heal, because little of God was here. 2*dly*, It was suggested to me, that those who had sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost never thought ill of it, nor rue that they did sin it. It was replied, There may be a rueing and a repenting, because there may be a fearful expectation which may make them rue what they have done. 3*dly*, At length the Lord brake in with this, It is certain, that those who have sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost can never sincerely repent. Yes, said I, that is true. Well, said the Lord, take but this counsel: Suspend for a time judging of yourself, neither concluding that your sin is pardonable or not, till you see whether God will give repentance or not; and, therefore, while the Lord spares your life, try Him with this, and seek repentance of Him. If He give grace, then mayest thou be certain and infallibly persuaded that thou hast not sinned this sin; but if not, and that God give you not repentance, you may conclude that you have sinned it, and will be damned, and your impenitency will damn you however. To despair will do no good, and by this course you can be no worse than you are; though thy condition be already desperate, what losest thou by this? you may get some peace in the meantime. This prevailed, and the Lord by it calmed my spirit, so as within a few days all the impressions of this temptation were worn away; but I little minded to endeavour repentance.

4. During this time I lived in divers sins; as, 1*st*, In seeking and living in pleasures. 2*dly*, Omitting of duties, and excellent occasions of powerful sermons that were at that time preached by the ablest men in the kingdom; as, likewise, I neglected to improve the society of godly Christians. 3*dly*, Neglecting my book and misspending my time. 4*thly*, Continuing in a course of enmity against the most godly, and defaming them sometimes falsely. 5*thly*, Playing at unlawful games as cards, dice, and other lotteries, and that in a place where severe laws were made against them. 6*thly*, Defaming of my neighbours with pasquils and light poems. 7*thly*, Carnal and light in my conversation. 8*thly*, Wasting and spending much money unnecessarily. 9*thly*, And once overtaken with drunkenness, fourteen days ere I was converted.

5. From all this I learn, 1*st*, The time of youth is the most fit season to seek God. I found much tractableness

in myself when I was young, Lam. iii. 27; Eccl. xii. 1. 2*ndly*, That the best mean under heaven, for seasoning young ones with the knowledge of God, is the admonition, care, and watchfulness of superiors; this was the only thing that did me good, Eph. vi. 4; Gen. xviii. 19; Deut. vi. 7. 3*rdly*, That the Lord doth usually bless this mean with success when it is made conscience of, Gen. xviii. 19, Abraham shall teach his children, and they shall keep My commandments. The pains of others upon me had some effect on my spirit, even whilst much did not appear to others. 4*thly*, There is a day of Christ's power; religion hath a time. Those who are now stamped with hell were then professing somewhat, and going about the means, and strict in observing the Lord's Day, Eccl. iii. 1. Every one got a touch of the wind of God's Spirit. 5*thly*, God is at much pains with sinners ordinarily ere He draw them fully, wholly, and effectually to Himself. I was far from conversion at this time; only I learned that there was a certain glorious estate of grace to which some were brought, and that I was a stranger unto it. Rev. iii. 20, He stands and knocks. Isa. v. 4, "What more could be done to My vineyard?" Though there were no more, surely I am much bound to the Lord for His pains He takes on me. 6*thly*, God is good to the unthankful and evil when they are in extremity. He heareth the cry of nature, and did hear me in my extremity when I cried to Him, Psal. cvii. 17, 18, 19; Isa. lvii. 17, 18, 19. 7*thly*, Let never any man, upon any account, neglect the use of prayer, or other means, though it seems never so unreasonable: for against hope, sense, and reason, when I was put to prayer, though there was nothing but the cries of oppressed nature, it was not in vain, 1 Kings xxi. 29; Psal. lxxviii. 36, 37, 38; 2 Kings xiii. 4, 5. 8*thly*, It is ordinary to seek to other physicians and means, and to rest on and close with them, ere there be a coming to Christ, Hos. v. 13. 9*thly*, All false rests will fail, and gilded grace will wear away, and must do so without Christ, partly because of their decaying nature. 1 Peter i. 24, "All flesh is as grass, and the glory thereof withereth;" partly because, while these continue green and fresh, the soul will not seek to come to Christ. None of the bad grounds came to perfection, Mat. xiii. 10*thly*, A soul that is a stranger to God, and true conversion, may get and receive some great favours and deliverances at the Lord's hand, and may have particular and clear experiences of the Lord's power and goodness, as Hagar, and may be therewith affected, Gen. xvi. 13. 11*thly*, None can be so bad but they may be worse; there is no bounding or term of sin, 1 Kings xxi. to 16th verse. 12*thly*, I find the neglect or careless performance of private duties, especially meditation and prayer, to have ever a great influence on all the decays that happen to a person, Exod. xvii. 11; Psal. lvi. 9; Mat. xxvi. 41.

CHAP. III.

DECLARING THE WAY AND MANNER OF MY CONVERSION, AND OF SOME THINGS THAT HAPPENED THEN AND IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER.

SECTION I.

Of the Conversion itself.

1. ABOUT the time that the related Providences happened unto me, being at the University, and being at the age of seventeen or eighteen years, our minister proposed to celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, of which he gave warning the Sabbath preceding the celebration thereof, I purposed (I know not upon what ground) to partake thereof. I had always a reverent esteem of that ordinance, and was under the deep impressions of eating and drinking my own damnation. I knew I was in an unconverted condition, and that, if betwixt that day and the next Lord's Day, I were not converted, that I would draw on myself a very grievous evil; and that, eating unworthily, I might give over hopes of ever thereafter being converted. The Lord did therefore put it in my mind, both by ordinary and extraordinary means, to do my utmost endeavour to win to a converted condition; nor was I of the judgment that conversion was within the compass of my own power, but I hoped that, doing diligence, the Lord might help; and for this cause set to work immediately, beseeching God that He would once effectually work upon my spirit, seeing all former means had been used in vain. I went to sermon, and I found a better relish in the sermon than I had wont

to find, and had an ear to hearken more attentively than at other times. After we were gone from church, I spent the rest of the day in spiritual exercises, and so was continuing very diligent in seeking the Lord, growing daily in the knowledge and love of His ways, seeing a beauty, and finding a relish that I never knew before. Books and discourses of practical divinity were only sweet, and so were spiritual exercises. I had now tasted of the wine, but had not bought it.

2. But on Wednesday, by six o'clock at night, finding by marks I had read in books that I was not converted, and not getting that extraordinary thing I expected, and withal fully resolved to partake of the Sacrament, I feared that I should eat and drink damnation to my own soul, and then that the remedilessness of my condition would be out of doubt. Sometimes I thought that I would suspend communicating at that time; and if this resolution had prevailed, I would not have troubled myself with religion at that time: for this was the day of my visitation, and this made me take pains even to eat and drink worthily. Therefore, hoping still for some good, I continued in my resolution; but as I said, when I saw all in vain, and that I met not with what I expected, though I met with more than ever I did before, discouragements did quite overwhelm me, and fears of drawing on more guilt did load me; and, withal, this apprehension lay heavy on me, and haunted me like a ghost, That it was in God's mind never to do me good: so that fear, discouragement, vexation, and despair, and some horror and grief, did all take hold of me. I resolved to set the next day apart for fasting, and therein to seek God, hoping that these extraordinary means might do something. Hanging, therefore, by the small thread, I went to prayer with many sad complaints; and the Lord, while I was like the prodigal son yet a great way off, ran to meet me. I addressed myself to speak to the Lord Christ, and then was there a Gospel view given me of Him; and some considerations and representations of Christ were

brought into my mind, that He was the Mediator, a friend, and Saviour to poor sinners, their only helper, the way, and the truth, and the life, that died for them, and one willing to be reconciled. What shall I say? While I was thus exercised, a marvellous light shined on my understanding, and with the eyes of my mind, not of my body, I saw that Just One in His glory, and love, and offices, and beauty of His person; such a sight as I never did see anything like it, and which did so swallow me up as I turned speechless, and only said, What is this? And where am I now? The glory, love, and loveliness of Jesus, revealed to me, did very far exceed all that ever I saw or could see in the world, insomuch that there was no comparison. I was drawn by this, and after I had recovered, I said, O Lord, Thou hast overcome me! Heart and hand, and all that I have, is Thine; I am content to live and die with Thee. Begone, poor world, and beggarly vanities, and despiteful devil and flesh, I will serve you no longer; I know now of a master and lover to whom henceforth I will dedicate myself. Now are all my doubts loosed; and now I see that I have not sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost. What shall I now do for the Lord? Let heaven and earth, angels and men, praise Him: for He hath looked graciously upon me, and that in my low condition. What am I, or my father's house, that Thine eye should be cast on me? There followed upon this such liberty as I thought I could spend the whole night in prayer. Now was I persuaded that I was converted, and was come to that pitch which formerly I wanted; and all the clouds evanished which were betwixt the Lord and my soul. This continued in its strength only for a quarter of an hour, and then it abated as to its measure, though not altogether; but something remained. After I rose from prayer, I went to the fields, and there sang songs of triumph. I comforted myself in my new condition, and prophesied to myself much more, seeing these were but the beginnings. Nor did I think that my happiness could be equalled by any; and now was

I fully content to communicate. I longed for some quiet place to pour out my soul unto the Lord; for I thought He would return, but He did it not. I bore the first repulse, hoping that at last the Lord would return. All scruples, fears, and doubts, were banished. I went to bed; and when I was lyen down, Now, said I, sleep securely, and so thou mayest, seeing thou art reconciled to God. Never could I do it one night before; but now let heaven and earth go together. I thought now, no Scriptures for me but such as were directed to saints, and therefore read some chapters of the Second Epistle of Peter, but found little life. This did shake me. I read some on Isaac Ambrose, and some marks he had of worthy communicants, of faith, love, and knowledge, and the evidence of the Spirit shining. I thought I had these marks; yet the withdrawing of my life and glory raised doubts in me, until, by prayer, again I got some of the glory of Christ seen, which revived me. And I was much affected with reading Isaac Ambrose's "New Birth," and I thought there was never anything so sweet.

SECTION II.

Of some Tentations and Clouds which thereafter followed, and how delivered out of them.

1. The Lord withdrawing that comfortable presence which I enjoyed before, humbled me very much, and mists began to arise, and the sky to darken. But that which indeed raised my exercise to some height was reading on Shepherd's "Sound Believer," wherein he describes the manner of true conversion. And as I read, I apprehended that God hath not dealt thus with me, and that I had not found such a work on my spirit as he describes (this was through misunderstanding him), and therefore that I was not as yet converted; and therefore that my communicating would be still an eating unworthily. And seeing what I met with was not Christ, I knew not who he might be, or

what I should do; and so was turned desperate. This wrought sorrow in my heart for a natural condition, and I sought the Lord in heaviness of heart, and indeed was not idle; but discouragements increased, and still nothing but absence, insomuch as I thought my condition worse than ever. I sought the Lord night and day, as much through sense of the danger of the want of Him as through anything else; but all would not do. Neither weekly sermons, books, counsels, nor prayers, could draw Jesus till His hour was come. I was then but ignorant, and knew not how to live by faith, and, wanting sense, was discouraged. The Sabbath came on which the sacrament was to be given; my fears and sorrows increased, and I was tempted not to communicate. There was one Mr R. B. serving the tables; he proponed an objection which some doubting Christians might have: "Many will say," saith he, "Oh! I fear to draw on more guilt in my communicating. But, Oh!" said he, "would to God that there were many of this judgment! But I will tell thee, poor doubting thing, whether thou mayest come or not. Tell me, wast thou seeking Christ or not this week?" "Yes," quoth I quietly. "It is like thou hast found something then. And did Christ drop in myrrh in the lock of the door of thy heart ere He went away? Know it, poor soul, He will come again, for that is His token; and thou mayest come here, and in His name I invite thee." This drew me to come, though I found no sensible presence at the time; and thereupon ensued great fears. Yet the same Mr R. B. did, in the afternoon, encourage me again, so as I resolved to pluck up my heart again.

2. I finding these discouragements did no good, and that comforting of my heart did no ill, did resolve to cheer myself, and used some general encouraging considerations to myself, and therewith was some way strengthened to go about my generation work. Thou art now engaged to be the Lord's servant; wait upon Him, and trust thy reward unto Him. This advice did no ill. Thereafter sermons

were very sweet unto me, and so was the exercise of all spiritual duties, so as I grew in the knowledge of the ways of God; and the more I knew, I was the more delighted in Him. Every spiritual duty did relish with me, and I was not well but when out of one duty into another; yea, the most cold prayers and discourses anent godliness were sweet, and opportunities of prayer and getting good were highly prized by me. I began, within a month's time thereafter, to be more slack; but the Lord warned me of it, and I mended my pace.

3. Thus was the everlasting seed sown that was the light of glory then arising upon my soul. But this did not long continue; for thereafter shortly there arose a more grievous storm, and of longer continuance than any I had met with yet: for the sacrament being to be given in the town about that time, I resolved to partake thereof, to see if I could get anything from God; and for this cause prepared myself diligently, and went about the work of self-examination. But being but young, and having small experience of my own heart, I could get little clearness; however, this exercise stirred up some things ready to die in me, and I did still grow in the knowledge and love of the truth; until one afternoon, which I had set apart for seeking of God, I was reading on Luke, 22d chap., where Christ did eat the passover with His disciples; and reading these words, "and the twelve apostles with Him," I know not how it came to pass, but, reflecting on my deadness in reading such love as this, I concluded I had no grace; and, withal, observing how Christ was so familiar with His apostles, and how unkind to me, the apprehensions of distance and separation from Christ were so fearful, that incontinently the wind was up very boisterous, and I was brought again to the rack. Then did my evil nature discover itself to me, and then did I murmer and fret against God, that was so kind to others, and yet kept such distance with me. I envied, as I thought, the very apostles with some despite, as I conceived. Fretting and murmuring did but like rain increase the

floods, and nowise abate them; so that in sorrow and bitterness of heart, I walked up and down for want of God, whom I could not find, nor knew how to seek, and under the sensible apprehensions of His wrath, and of an unconverted condition. All these things, with the fearful frame of my spirit, did put me in great horror, so that I utterly lost almost all hope. But these winds, through some process of time, were calmed, and in one of my calm fits I read on Shepherd's "Sincere Convert," this being the first time I ever saw it. I had not read four leaves of him when I was thrown on my back. The first arrow that did stick in my reins, and went into my heart, was from these words: "The children of God do nothing for fear of hell; they loathe to live like slaves in Bridewell, and like dogs for fear of the whip." Upon this my slavish acting was discovered, and therefore I concluded, that wanting that kindly spirit that acts out of love, which, indeed, as then did not appear being under a strong fit of the spirit of bondage; I say, not finding this, I concluded I was yet "in the gall of bitterness." I went after dinner through the fields, and read that book all through; and the power of God was present. And reading what lengths hypocrites might come, and the sadness of an unconverted condition, and the great difficulty of saving conversion, I was wounded through and through. My condition was now worse than ever, and I was brought to a certain despair; only I knew not what to think of the last glorious sight I had of Christ. But as I read forward I was put out of that doubt. In the same author's discourse of a false spirit, which is a means by which a false peace is begotten, he goes on and compares it with the Spirit of God, and saith, "That as the Spirit of God doth humble, so likewise doth the false spirit; and that this false spirit did reveal Christ, and fill the soul with glorious apprehensions of Him, so that the man seems to be wrapt up to heaven, and hence cries, 'My Lord, and my God.'" Here was all thou met with, said my conscience: this did put the business out of all doubt, and I counted what I met with formerly but a delusion of Satan. And here all props were taken away, and by this means a breach was made to all tentations to enter in; and the devil seeing his time, entered in with a whole sea of horrors. Then was brought to my mind my old sin of blasphemy again, and vehemently urged that I had sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost, which with such violence he pressed, as I could get nothing spoken for myself. And that which did heighten all this was, that the law brake in upon me, that sin might become exceeding sinful, and wrought in me all manner of disobedience; for my heart murmured, fretted, and swelled against God for guiding me thus; and having terrible apprehensions of Him, I could not love Him. And now, said conscience, see how thou smellest already of hell; how canst thou imagine that God will look upon thee that hast such a cursed nature? The brand of the reprobate is upon thee; why wilt thou therefore pray or hope any more? Yet notwithstanding would I pray, and that frequently; I know not what put me out to it. Many times did I grovel on the ground, and sought His favour, pity, and compassion; then was it that my tears were my meat: then was prayer bitterness to me, and my mouth closed, and I as it were bound with bands; for God was never more terrible than when I approached to Him in prayer. I remember one day praying out in the fields, I had this expression: Lord, said I, if Thou wilt for nothing else compassionate me, yet compassionate my young years; and yet I know not how Thou canst break Thy faithful word, who hast said that such as sin against the Holy Ghost shall never be pardoned. Nature seeks its own preservation, and, therefore, having no other shift to make, I applied myself to the Lord only. And now my greatest trouble was concerning the unpardonableness of my sins, especially that particular sin of blasphemy; yet would my spirit calm betwixt hands, and be at ease for a while. I thought the devil had a great hand in my tentations; for, said I, while I was walking after the flesh there was nothing of this seen or heard; but since I have come to, and engaged with Christ, and followed His ways, is all this come upon me; it is not likely that this is in wrath, or from God. I continued in the extremity of this condition but a few days, never opening my case to any, being bashful. I was sent for by my relations upon some emergent occasion that did fall out. I was glad of the opportunity, because by that means I should shun the sacrament that was to be given about that time; but, coming there, my tentations and horrors increased. I thought every creature happy but myself; meat, drink, and company, were a burden unto me.

4. That which did mainly trouble me was my particular sin of blasphemy, which did in my apprehension render my condition helpless and hopeless. 2*dly*, The evil and terribleness of a natural condition, and the exceeding great difficulty of saving conversion. 3*dly*, The swelling and raging of my heart with hatred and enmity against God, "that sin might become exceeding sinful," Rom. vii. 7. 4*thly*, This was a terrible consideration, and took away the comfort of all means, that all I did was sinful, because it did proceed from me; and therefore I was many times dung back from prayer by this, Why comest thou to Him, who hates and loathes every work of thy hands? 5*thly*, Unsuccessfulness of means for a long time, whereby I concluded my case to be desperate, and no cure for it at all. 6*thly*, These words sounded terribly in my heart, and were violently beaten in upon me, God will damn thee, He has decreed it, it is impossible it should be otherwise. 7*thly*, The consideration of the great number that should be damned, and the paucity of such as should be saved. 8*thly*, My great frustrating in respect of former enjoyments, Psal. cii. 10, "He hath raised me up, and cast me down." 9*thly*, Terrible dreams and night visions of hell and judgement. 10*thly*, Fearful apprehensions of God, who was represented to me as a consuming fire, and an angry judge. Upon all this, *lastly*, ensued a terrible despair, prophesying that things would never be better. Hell did not trouble me much, but God's wrath, and separation from Him, did lie heaviest on

me; and this was the evil that I did see and feel in sin. The devil's end in afflicting with a particular sin was to cause me despair, and to take off my thought of any other consideration.

5. While I was thus hopeless and helpless, not knowing what to do, to aggravate all my miseries, I was to hear a dead, lifeless preacher. Ah! and must I, said I, have this with all my evils, to come under a dead ministry? But I went with the rest, thinking it indifferent whom I heard, seeing I saw it beyond the power of means to help me. The text was, 1 Tim. i. 1, "Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ." I went betwixt sermons to a secret place, and there poured out my soul to God in prayer; but no refreshing. I came unto the afternoon's sermon again; but behold the Lord's goodness! from an unexpected hand, and from so general a text, and at such an unexpected time, the Lord did send a calm, and did that which I thought was impossible, viz., clear me fully (when I was capable of nothing less, and after all my considerations had been in vain) that I had not sinned unpardonably, from these words which he cited in his sermon, "Howbeit, God forgave me, because I did it ignorantly and in unbelief." The Spirit said, Whatever thy sins have been, they have been done in unbelief, or whilst thou wast an unbeliever, when thou knewest nothing of God, though they were not done ignorantly; all thy sins were committed in a time when there was not so much as a common work of the Spirit, producing a common temporary faith. This was enough; God may make anything strong to do His work. The devil and all his storms were rebuked and calmed, and that suddenly, and so fully, that I was never thereafter assaulted with temptations of sinning against the Holy Ghost. My heart was made holy, and I put on a full resolution to seek the Lord till I should find Him, and do all in my power for this effect. And now I had good hopes, seeing my sins were pardonable; and this hope produced a cheerful endeavour to seek the Lord, which I did, and was labouring to do good unto others,

and to spread the knowledge of Christ, by which means I daily grew in the knowledge and love of God. The books I most read on were, Shepherd, Fenner, and "Practice of Piety," and "Confession of Faith." God did bless all to me, though I was not to my own apprehensions converted, but waiting for some glorious manifestation of Christ, which should suddenly, and fully and sensibly change me; and, waiting for this, I continued in this case for the space of a month.

SECTION III.

Other things relating to my Conversion, and the Lord's dealing with me, considered.

1. I look upon this as the time of my conversion, and that then the everlasting seed was sown; that heaven was begun, and Christ formed within me, upon these considerations: 1*st*, Because I found my heart changed as to my company; I hated the most strict before, but now I immediately found I loved and delighted most in the most holy and strict people; so that the persons whom before I hated upon the account of some disobligements, I now loved and followed: and this love was universal, so as, when either I heard tell of a godly man, or saw him, my heart warmed; and the "love of the brethren" I look on as a sign that I am "translated from death to life," 1 John iii. 14. 2*dly*, Because I found a new esteem of, a great delight in, and love to, and longing after all the ordinances of Christ and His commands; I saw a glory in them, I relished them, every thing that savoured of God was sweet, 1 Pet. ii. 2, which I never found before. 3*dly*, Because I found my heart at that instant mortified to the world, and the esteem of and delight in it gone, 1 John ii. 15. 4*thly*, Because my soul did see, esteem, love, and delight in the Lord Jesus above all, and preferred Him not only to the world, but to the saints, duties, and ordinances; and made a perpetual,

cordial, and personal covenant to live with Him and serve Him, Psal. lxxiii. 25, 26; 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. 5*thly*, I found a glorious, universal, and abiding change, wrought by the Lord Himself, "from sin and Satan to God, and from darkness to light," 2 Cor. v. 17, "All things were then new." 6*thly*, I was carried with a great zeal for the Lord against all sin and sinners; and did strive to draw all men to Christ, by instructing and exhorting them, Prov. x. 21, "The lips of the righteous feed many;" and, Luke xxii. 32, "When thou art converted, strengthen others." Then, 7*thly*, I found a new light discovering to me the mysteries of the kingdom of God, and making me from that time forward to understand the Scriptures the exercise of saints recorded in Scripture; and I delighted not only in the history or relation of the Scripture, but in the prophecies, promises, doctrines, and spiritual part thereof, which I never relished before, Prov. ii. 10, and viii. 9. Then was wisdom and her ways pleasant, and became plain to me, which were before locked up and a mystery, Matt. xiii. 11. 8*thly*, In respect of the Lord's after-dealing with me, and of His former dealing; for He was preparing me before, and dinging me out of my false rests. And ever thereafter, although there have been tentations, and shakings, and interruptions, yet hath that spunk never died which was kindled, but hath been growing at last, more and more; some good ever remained, and in my sorest decays, the impressions of God's dealing at this time remained, so as there was a longing after the first husband, which was the means to reduce me out of a backsliding condition. And therefore I look upon it as the "well of water springing up to everlasting life;" and that, in that respect of the remaining seed, I think I am "born of God," 1 John iii. 9. Hypocrites rejoice but for a season.

2. I have looked on the Lord's dealings towards me, and what this manifestation of Himself in such a manner as I never had the like all my life might speak to me, and what might be the ends thereof: and, after inquiry, I found

them to be, *1st*, To draw the soul to God by faith and love. He lets taste His wine, that it may be bought; and therefore is there a "seeing of the Son and a believing on Him," John vi. 40; John xx. 29. Oh love and come to this glorious One, and, having discovered Him to be the "Lord of glory, open the everlasting doors," Psal. xxiv. 7, 9, yea, and when this love is dead, quicken it again, by remembering Him. *2dly*, To strengthen our faith in His love, and our hope of heaven; and therefore hath He given this testimony of His love, revealing to me that rare sight hid from the world, to be a pledge and earnest of heaven; and upon this to build and strengthen my faith, both in drawing near to Him, and expecting all good from Him. This revelation of Jesus, enlightening, comforting, and sanctifying, is to me the earnest of the inheritance, and seal of the Spirit, mentioned Eph. i. 13, 14; 2 Cor. i. 22, "Which is the earnest of our inheritance." *3dly*, To comfort me in my choice, showing that I have not casten away all for shadows, and what I am to expect in heaven, of which already I have tasted, 1 Cor. ii. 9, "Eye hath not seen," etc. *4thly*, To manifest and make known Himself in His condescending power and glory, of which I might doubt if I had not seen with mine own eyes. Why should I doubt of this His power, when I have myself seen such a miracle, the blind eye opened, the dead heart quickened, and the heart wholly changed? "He that believeth hath the witness in Himself," 1 John v. 10. Oh to be raised from hell to heaven!

3. I have likewise been thinking what this storm immediately ensuing upon this should mean; and my being cast down to hell, after lifting up to heaven. *1st*, To let me see the evil of mine own heart, and exceeding sinfulness thereof, which in such a degree I never saw before; and by the murmuring and rising of my heart, and fierce resistance I made, I perceive that by nature I am a bitter enemy to God, and a toad full of poison and venom. To humble me, and to acknowledge His grace and love the more, Job. i. 11; 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. *2dly*, To be a ground of faith when in

like straits and cases again, and to have a proof of His power; the Lord in my extremity, when there was no appearance of help, when there was nothing in me but frowardness and rebellion, when I cried, yet pitied me, conquering both my sin and misery. And why should I doubt Him now again? He ever helped me when in extremity, yea, when my case was most desperate, Rom. v. 4; 1 Sam. xvii. 37; 2 Tim. iv. 17, 18; 2 Cor. i. 10; Psal. lxiii. 7. 3*dly*, To acquaint me with the Lord's ways of conversion, and with His terrors, that I might thereby be a better guide unto others, and be made more serious, 2 Cor. i. 4, and v. 14; Psal. xxxiv. 4, 5, 6, 11. 4*thly*, That God might by me show a pattern of all long-suffering, who obtained mercy being so wild, 1 Tim. i. 16. 5*thly*, To show His justice as He is the governor of the world. I was very wicked, and by the law deserved severe punishment; I trampled on God's kindness and goodness. And therefore did the righteous Lord make me find sin bitter, and for this cause delivered me over to Satan; He took me in His own hand and corrected me, not willing that I should die and be condemned either with or for the world, 1 Cor. xi. 32; 2 Sam. xii. 13, 14. 6*thly*, To hold out and represent (to others) the Lord's goodness, love, and condescendency, that by this experience of His love my heart might be endeared to Him, Psal. cxvi. 1, "I will love the Lord, because He hath heard my prayers." Which love of His was kythed in delivering me from so great depths so unexpectedly and by Himself, and so fully and clearly after all means had been used in vain; and to me who was so ignorant and wild, and by my unbelief and murmuring more wild, yet He came over all, and "freed me from my fears," Isa. lvii. 16, 17, 18. 7*thly*, To ding out the bottom of that tentation, and to pluck it out by the roots, whereby I was made to believe that I had sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost; which the Lord did now so fully and clearly, that I never after was troubled with it. And this was all Satan gained by this encounter. 8*thly*, I think it was a mean to make me live by faith, and to spean me from sense, 1 Pet. i. 24, 25, seeing by experience I found that all these sensible glories are but grass that withers, and so not to be leaned on; but the Lord's word endureth for aye.

4. I will conclude with remarking some instructions and lessons I learned from these providences. 1*st*, It is more sure to live by faith than by sense; the life of sense is a life of uncertainties, exposed to assaults, 2 Cor. v. 7; 1 Pet. i. 24. 2*dly*, There is ordinarily in the day of espousals something extraordinary of God's love and glory manifested; the fatted calf is killed when first the prodigal is brought home, Luke xv. 22, 23. No less can assure them of their Father's love, nor take away their wildness, and make them comply with their new life. Hence, Hos. ii. 15, "I will make thee sing as in the days when I brought thee out of the land of Egypt." 3*dly*, The soul in conversion closeth chiefly with the person of Christ, Jer. iv. 1, "If thou wilt return, return to Me;" and the not doing hereof is complained of, Hos. vii. 16, "They return, but not to the Most High." 4*thly*, Grace makes a great, wonderful, and universal change, changing the outward life and inward frame, 2 Cor. v. 17, "All things are new;" new prayers, new love, new company, new opinions, and new principles. A man is much different from what he was, not only while a profane man, but even while a civil or moral man under some common work. 5*thly*, One main way by which a gracious frame is kythed is in love to the saints, and joining with them, Acts ix. 26. Converted Paul essayeth to join himself with the disciples. 6*thly*, There may be much corruption to be mortified in a soul newly brought in to God, and under great flashes. For notwithstanding of all this diligence, delight in duties and joy, I was full of ignorance, unbelief; selfish, proud, conceited and light. Grace is indeed but small when it begins, Mat. xviii. 3; Mark iv. 31, unknown to themselves; little faith, patience, and rooted love, though some flashes there may be. 7*thly*, The Lord draws sweetly and gently; and, in the work of conversion, much of His love, of His

power, and of His glory, is outed and expressed in that act and work, John x. 16, and vi. 44, 45; Hos. xi. 3, 4. The work of conversion hath much of God engraven on it. 8*thly*, Greatest flowings have greatest ebbings, Psal. cii. 10, "Thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down." Mat. iii. 17, with Mat. iv. 1; 2 Cor. xii. 4, 7. 9*thly*, Sudden and extraordinary flashes of joy and spiritual enlargements are more dangerous, and not so firm, as that which is less sensible and attained by degrees and pains. The bad grounds received the word with joy, and sprang up suddenly; but the good grounds bring forth fruit with patience, Luke viii. 15, and Mat. xiii. 20. 10*thly*, Whatever good comes suddenly (let it be sincere, or unsound, and so but an appearing good) will not continue in that height, but these tides and inundations will come to their ordinary channel again, some seeds and impressions and dippings may remain, but "all flesh is grass," 1 Pet. i. 24. "We walk by faith, and not by sight," 2 Cor. v. 7. I had never an extraordinary enlargement, either of joy, strength, or sanctification, but the waters dried up. There are no sudden steps in grace; "I will not drive them out all at once," Exod. xxiii. 29. "They shall go from strength to strength," Psal. lxxxiv. 7. "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven," that leavens all insensibly, Mat. xiii. 33. Be content to get matters wrought by degrees, strength, labour, and pains; and murmur not at the tediousness thereof, neither expect great things suddenly; or if you meet with some such thing, look not for the continuance thereof, till by degrees ye come up to it. 11*thly*, Little difference appearing from a sudden rapture of joy betwixt what is in saints and hypocrites, it were wisdom, when we examine our estate, to examine rather by the whole course of the life, than by one particular work. Continued kindness to the Lord speaks more than any particular enjoyment, though never so extraordinary, Psal. xxiii. 6, and xxxvii. 37, "Mark the perfect man's end;" see what all ends in. Conclude not peremptorily from beginnings of any either as to good or evil; I could build little on this, if I did not see it backed with an after-tract of kindness; or else might have thought it the tasting of the powers of the world to come. The great visible difference of the good ground from the stony ground was a fruit brought forth to perfection. Foolish virgins' lamps will go out at last, Mat. xxv. 12*thly*, The more pains and the longer continuance the work of preparation will be of, the deeper; the more solid and glorious the superstructure will be, Mat. xiii. 21, "It wanted deepness of earth." 13*thly*, Unbelief and doubting of interest is Satan's first tentation to apostacy, Luke iv. 3; Heb. iii. 12; Jer. ii. 28; Lam. i. 9, for I found, when unbelief came, it made a breach for all other evils. 14*thly*, Legal terrors in themselves tend to evil, though God accidentally drives good in them; and therefore not to be simply desired or cherished, 1 John iv. 18; Gal. iv. 24, 30; Rom. vii. 9, yet the Lord brings "meat out of the eater." 15*thly*, One main evil young converts are subject unto is mistakes (as we may see by Scripture examples and our experiences), especially anent the nature of sanctification and God's love, which, until cleared, is matter of sad exercise. I had many mistakes, which were as breaches leaving me open continually, and for many years, to the assaults of the enemy; of which I will speak afterwards. 16*thly*, Not one remarkable circumstance of Providence wherewith His people are trysted, whether sweet or sour, good or evil, but in the end proves there was mercy in it, Psal. xxv. 10, "All His ways are mercy and truth to them that fear Him;" which, though for a while, through our not regarding it, or unbelief misconstructing all, appears not, yet it is so, and God usually discovers it after many days. For, after a long while reflecting on times past, I saw in them so much of God, that I never before considered, that I found matter of blessing God for all, Rom. viii. 28, "All things work for good;" even their sins and desertions. 17*thly*, God Himself is more eminently seen, in the mercies of His people, than instruments; and therefore ordinarily none doth good but Himself; and that not in the way, thing;

manner, and time, they propose unto themselves, but as He proposes. "There was no strange God with Him," Deut. xxxii. 12. "O people saved by the Lord," Deut. xxxiii. 29; Psal. lxviii. 35, and xviii. 31, 32. 18*thly*, It is possible folks may meet with more sharp convictions after conversion than before, especially if they have not been well hammered with the law, Heb. x. 32, "After ye were enlightened, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;" which are not to be confined to outward, but inward likewise; Heman may still suffer terrors, Psal. lxxxviii. throughout. And I question if Job ever found such work as afterwards. I grant they "have not received the spirit of bondage" (which is one's constant frame), hence Hannah is called "a woman of a sorrowful spirit." Before conversion (except when madness made me rejoice), death and judgment were continually terrible unto me, and "through fear of death, was kept all my lifetime in bondage," Heb. ii. 15, but now it is but in fits. A fearer of God may "sit in darkness, and have no light," Isa. l. 10. But though they create sorrow and discouragements unto themselves, and love to swim in these black streams, yet have not they received this spirit of bondage, but the Spirit of adoption, and they may come to God as a Father. This is their allowance, and the new nature and seed of grace tend to this; yet preternaturally, and by accident through mistakes and corruptions, it is hindered that it vents not itself in these filial motions, and will in end do it; yet, trysted with dispensations of Providence, they may be troubled with this spirit of bondage. Howsoever they take it and harbour it, yet they received it not of God; "Perfect love casteth out fear," 1 John iv. 18; it is not their allowance.

CHAP. IV.

RELATING SOME THINGS TOUCHING A DECAY THAT HAPPENED IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER.

I FELL in a sad decay both of light, and life, and consolation; the steps of it were:

1. Step I.—Was unbelief and doubting of my interest in God, and of His love, through the mistakes of the nature of sanctification, and by a wrong construction of providences, and ignorance of the covenant of grace; so as I was in Job's condition; though I had prayed, and God had answered me, yet could I not believe it; I could not believe I was so happy as to be converted. And having such sad thoughts of myself, I had a bad construction of God and all His ways to me, inasmuch as I thought God did in wrath take away my terrors. Ah! said I, time was when the Lord was taking pains with me, and did lay seige with the law against my soul, at which time I delighted in duties; He put me in His fire and furnace, but now will He take no more care of me; now hath He raised His siege, and given me over: Oh miserable man that I am! I am left now to the judicial plague of an hard heart, which hath seized upon me; I am to pine out the rest of my days in vanity, sin, and trouble. And when my heart was in any frame, this, said I, is but to make me secure that I may not fear; it is but a delusion. Which had these sad effects upon my soul; *1st*, Strange and hard thoughts of God as of an enemy, Luke xix. 21; Gen. iii. 5, as one that envied our good. *2dly*, I judged all that God said of His love in His word to be but wind at best, or compliments or snares to

entrap; and so made Him a liar, 1 John v. 10, and by this means was made incapable to be taken with Christ's allurements in the Gospel. 3*dly*, Hence I could neither love nor believe Him, nor by any means be drawn to Him, 1 Cor. xiii. 7, "Charity believeth all things." For how could I love Him in whom I believed I had no other interest than that of a cruel judge ready to condemn, and watching for evil against me, and that when His "words were smoother than oil?" Psal. lv. 21; Zech. xi. 8. 4*thly*, I had no will to keep communion with Him, was wearied of Him. When the Israelites said, "We have no portion or inheritance in the son of Jesse," the next was, "Every man to his tents," and did quit Him. Jer. iii. 19, "Thou shalt call Me, My Father, and shalt not depart from Me." 5*thly*, I was heartless or slight in duties, whereby He was honoured, and communion with Him entertained; wanting love and hope, Jer. xviii. 12; Lam, i. 9; Luke xix. 21. Through unbelief my hands were weakened, and I departed from the living God. 6*thly*, Finding no satisfaction in God, which I could not do whilst these principles remained, I behoved to have it elsewhere in the creature. Jer. ii. 13, "Forsaking of God, the fountain of living waters, and hewing to ourselves broken cisterns," are joined. 7*thly*, Sermons did me no good, because not heard with faith, Heb. iv. 2, whereas, if I had believed and trusted in God, I should be strengthened with the joy of His salvation, Neh. viii. 10; Prov. xvii. 22; 2 Cor. ii. 7.

2. STEP II.—Notwithstanding of all this, I had hopes, that though as yet the Lord had not converted me, yet I might be converted, and therefore did not despair of it. Some secret thoughts in duties would drop in persuading me to hope, and some relish in duties. As likewise, since I was persuaded by a strong hand my sins were pardonable, and that the Lord possibly might pardon; this made me continue in the means. Satan therefore sought to beat me from this, or at least to make me remiss in them; and, knowing that palpable vanities would not do (for I had

been burned with that candle already), therefore would compass this by making me close with an appearance of good, which He did thus: I studied stenography or short-writing, in the study of which, aiming at perfection in it, I was excessive, and so taken up altogether from any other thing, that I could scarce get the form of duties gone about two times a day. In end I resolved to give way, cheated with this, that, the sooner I acquired knowledge herein, I should the sooner have leisure to wait on God; but however, this spirit of whoredom caused me to err, and took away my heart. This was the second mean of my decay.

3. STEP III.—When I was called home, through want of godly company, and dead formal society among which I lived, I was brought a further length of decay, even to omit duties almost altogether; contenting myself ordinarily with bed-prayers, and slight reading of Scripture and godly books. Several things had influence on this; the want of a convenient room, a prevailing spirit of sloth that would not break through difficulties, some false hopes that all would be well. Sometimes my heart would secretly despair, and prophesy things would never be better, and it is in vain to pray; through these things it came to pass that my heart turned altogether out of tune, and heeded not my work at all. Now had preachings and sermons no relish at all; then did I see that fulfilled, "He that followeth vain persons shall become poor," Prov. xxviii. 19; 1 Cor. xv. 33, "Evil company corrupteth good manners."

4. STEP IV.—Then, through want of the fear of God, and unwatchfulness, did I become vain and light in my conversation; I followed lies and vanities; I carded, complied with sinful customs, made no conscience of what company I came into, "inventing to myself instruments of music," and seeking contentment from the creature. When company was away, my heart turned melancholy, but did not turn to God. I would pray when trysted with any disappointments; but still, through interruption, lost more ground than I gained, so as I went daily down the

stream, and grew exceeding hard-hearted. Spiritual duties were a weariness and a burden; and thus I was not only discouraged and remiss in duties, slighting them altogether, but grew very untender and carnal in my conversation.

5. Whence a fifth step, which was, going to some relations to pass a visit, where there were many professors and much profession; but there I got a dead stroke, so as it is a wonder how ever I recovered; in a word, I turned desperate, and said, "There is no hope; I have loved idols, and after them I will go," Jer. ii. 25. The grounds of this despair were, 1*st*, A great and long account of sins that had run up upon me, which I thought would never be pardoned, Jer. ii. 28. 2*dly*, The terrible hard frame of my heart, and great deadness I was in, so that I thought I would never recover again, John xi. 39; Ezek. xxxvii. 3, "Can these bones live?" Gen. xviii. 11, 12. 3*dly*, Some fruitless vain attempts I made to recover myself; my strength wasted in vain; and hence I said, "This evil is of the Lord, and remediless, what should I wait on Him any more?" 2 Kings vi. 33. 4*thly*, The complaints, doubts, and discouragements of others, and their unsuitable walking up to their principles, who yet were eminent for godliness in the estimation of others; they went with bowed down backs, and raised an ill report to me of the Lord and his ways; and therefore were my hands weakened by these spies, Num. xiii. 30. 5*thly*, Their unloving carriage towards me, and keeping at a distance, and taunting me. At another time, seeking to join in with them, and to bear the burden of a good discourse lest it should die, I was put off with a taunt. It is true, my conversation at that time was not Gospel-like; yet they had beams in their own eyes, and they should have dealt in greater meekness with me, and kythed love by a friendly reprehension. This turned me averse to them, and to their way. Ezek. xxxiv. 21, They pushed with horn and side, and this produced scattering. 6*thly*, I was but too much countenanced by others, and humoured and complied with; for I was given to foolish jesting, and they took but

too much pleasure in this, and never once gave me a friendly warning or reproof, although my ways were displeasing to them: "The soul that lacketh instruction shall die." *7thly*, Satan was beating in strange tentations on my soul, sometimes telling me I was judicially hardened since I could not mourn for my sins, and that it was ever so since my terrors were removed. And then that place, Isa. vi. 10, came to my mind, "Make the heart of this people fat." Sometimes thinking my time was past, and my day gone, and that Christ had given His last knock, and that the door was shut. That place, Prov. i. 26, troubled me, "Because I called, and ye would not hear, therefore shall ye call, and I will not hear;" therefore, it is in vain now to cry or pray. Sometimes Satan said I had sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost, citing Heb. vi. 4. For it is true (was it suggested to me) thy blasphemies were not that sin, because thou didst that in unbelief, and not enlightened; but now thou hast been enlightened, and tasted of the powers of the world to come, and hast fallen away, and laid a new foundation from thy dead works for repentance, and therefore it is impossible to be renewed again; and this is the sin against the Holy Ghost. This raised not that terror in me which tentations of this kind were wont to do formerly; only made me heartless and discouraged me. And then would Satan add, Dost thou not mark how unmoved thou art with this heavy message, which would cause any other to tremble but thyself? And why art thou not shaken? Because the Lord has hardened thee like Pharaoh, that thou canst not hearken; the sentence is past, and the stone is laid upon thy grave; and now all thy life is gone, thou art twice dead, and plucked up by the roots. With these thoughts I was dung from duties and their cheerful exercise; with pleasures, company, and want of inward and outward exercise, I was kept in my security and strong bonds.

6. My sins were, *1st*, Slighting and omitting of duties, public and private. *2dly*, Vain and light conversation like the world; the show of my countenance witnessed against

me. 3*dly*, Idle jesting, Eph. v. 4. 4*thly*, Breaking of the Sabbath with idleness and mine own words. 5*thly*, Following of the lusts of the flesh, and divers vanities. 6*thly*, Sensuality. 7*thly*, Doing no good, neither glorifying God, nor edifying others, nor profiting myself. 8*thly*, Haunting vain company, and not reproving them. 9*thly*, Sinful customs and recreations, though debated by some; such as healthing and playing at cards.

7. Notwithstanding of this, the Lord upheld me by His right hand, and kept in the dying spunk, that all these waters could not quite extinguish it; I fell not totally away, nor was I utterly forsaken of God, Jer. v. 5. For these things remained; 1*st*, I was put out to pray, meditate, and read now and then; I was not dung altogether from duties; I did not show myself to have no knowledge at all, in not calling on God, Psal. xiv. 4. 2*dly*, There remained a secret and quiet hope things would be well, and a looking up to Him; though cast down, yet not in despair, 2 Cor. iv. 8. 3*dly*, Love and affection to, and estimation of, the people of God, and delight in them, still remained, so as even then I loved them above others. 4*thly*, Dissatisfiedness with my present condition, groaning under and mourning when I remembered the days of old; this course was not pleasant, I was like a bone out of joint, these matters were not my element. 5*thly*, Some love to my first husband remained, and a preferring of the first course and life, even in its worst, before this, even as one prefers the day to the night; and often would I say that word, with Job, "O that it were with me as in months past, when the candle of the Lord shined upon my head!" Job xxix. 2, 3, 4. 6*thly*, I knew that it was ill with me; though I slept, yet I was not so dead as to be without sense or knowledge altogether.

8. God's ends in this, for anything I can learn, were only to give further proof of His love, in renewing His kindness, in sparing me whilst in this condition, in preserving me from turning apostate, and, in His time, graciously reviving me again with much pains and long labour. 2*dly*, To keep

me watchful in time coming, lest a worse thing befall me. 3*dly*, And to let me find the power of sin, and of my original corruption, more fully, 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. 4*thly*, To keep me humble for ever after it, that I may not open the mouth, Ezek. xvi. 63.

9. These things had influence on my decay, mainly; 1*st*, Want of outward and inward afflictions. I had no changes, therefore feared not God, Psal. lv. 19. The spurs were out of my side, terrors were away which drave me to duty. 2*dly*, In respect of the decay of that inward sweetness which accompanied duty formerly, God, having brought me out of Egypt into the wilderness, had withdrawn that; and, wanting these by-fleeces, I fell in my walk; "For this Moses, we know not what is become of him," Exod. xxxii. 1. 3*dly*, Through process of time the spirits wearied, and the impressions of things did wear away; and, being wearied, I desired sleep: "They rejoiced in His light for a season," John v. 35; and, as the Galatians, did run well at the break. 4*thly*, Many tentations from within and from without, which the Lord kept up before. Now the Lord let out my original corruption, and I found nothing but a dead hard heart from within and discouragement from without, and this made the way more hard. 5*thly*, The powerful means were removed; the good company and powerful sermons were gone which did feed me. 6*thly*, Godless company, that had no grace, with which I was trysted, that did eat out all religion out of me. 7*thly*, The formal, carnal, and lifeless conversation of some (much cried up) professors, made me even despair as it were. 8*thly*, Too eagerly following of lawful comforts, and employments, and studies. 9*thly*, Growing remiss in the exercise of duties, especially of private prayer and meditation. 10*thly*, Not looking to ills in the beginning, but letting them run on; not heeding things, or considering my ways, but sleeping; and therefore became my garden overspread with thorns. 11*thly*, Want of knowledge and principles, whereby I became over credulous, and believed every thing that was suggested. 12*thly*,

Unbelief and discouragements, whereby I concluded all lost and desperate, and God a hard master, and that I was not yet converted: an evil heart of unbelief in departing from God, Heb. iii. 12. 13*thly*, Taken up with lesser matters, and not exercised with weighty truths and duties; taken up with trials of grace, and not exercised with common principles. 14*thly*, Living by sense, and not by faith.

10. I observe these things from this decay of mine: 1*st*, It is ordinary, and an evil to be watched against, to fall away from that measure saints receive at their first conversion, Rev. ii. 4, 5, "Thou hast fallen from thy first love." Tentations come, and God withdraws His strength and comfort; and in process of time the spirits weary, and this breeds fainting. 2*dly*, Saints fall not away totally; something still remaineth, 1 John iii. 9, "His seed remaineth in him;" Cant. v. 2, "My heart waketh." 3*dly*, Whatever the decay of saints be, yet the Lord ordinarily recovers them out of it again; "Though they fall, they shall arise," Micah vii. 8. The slumbering virgins were at last awakened, Mat. xxv. 5, 7. 4*thly*, Unbelief, especially in passing hard sentences on our own estate, and doubting of our sonship, the first and greatest cause of apostacy, Heb. iii. 12; therefore, Satan tempted Christ with this first: "If Thou be the Son of God." Jer ii. 25, "There is no hope, we have loved idols." 5*thly*, A Christian thrives as he keeps up correspondence with God in private duties, especially secret prayer. Mat. xxvi. 41, "Pray, lest ye enter into temptation;" Exod. xvii. 11. 6*thly*, A backslider ordinarily goeth a great length ere he recover, Jer. ii. 5, "They have deeply revolted, they have gone far from me." 7*thly*, Saints are drawn from God by appearances of good, by seeming temptations; they are beguiled in the use of lawful comforts. We should watch much against this; "a tree to be desired to make one wise." 8*thly*, Backsliding and spiritual apostacy comes by degrees; he falls not all at once. Mat. xxv. The virgins first slumbered, then slept; hence it is called backsliding: a man quietly slides from God. 9*thly*, No

means can reclaim a backsliding soul, nor make the ebbing soul flow, till the Lord's hour come. It is a stroke of Omnipotence that makes the fever turn; no physician can stop the issue. Hos. xiv. 4, It is God that healeth backslidings. 10*thly*, A man may contract in a way of backsliding such evils very quickly, that he will not for a long time get quite rid of. Sins and decays are very hard to cure. 11*thly*, Persons are ordinarily very secure, and quiet and sleeping, in a decaying condition; they sleep while the Son of man is betrayed to sinners. 12*thly*, Sense and affections, without knowledge, do expose a soul to many evils, and make their case very uncertain and unstable. Children in understanding, 1 Cor. xiv. 20, are "tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine," Eph. iv. 14. 13*thly*, A fiery temptation may be suspended and calmed; but, until it be cured by the Word, it will return again. All the time of this decay, my temptation of sinning the sin against the Holy Ghost did never recur, in respect it was once cured by the Word. 14*thly*, Ill company, and peace in the world, are ill attendants of a backslider, Prov. i. 32, "The prosperity of fools destroys them." Oh it is sad when carnal company and a soul departing from God tryst together! "Woe to him that is alone," Eccl. iv. 10. 15*thly*, A carnal generation of professors is greatly abominable to the Lord, and great plagues in the earth, especially to young beginners. Oh for the garments of praise! They raise an evil report; and ordinarily carnality and discouragement go together.

CHAP. V.

OF MY RECOVERY.

SECTION I.

Of the first several Steps, and manner thereof.

THE Lord did not raise me all at once out of my backslidden condition, nor without interruption (as might be thought), but very leisurely, and through many ups and downs. The seed was sown, and it grew; and I ate and drank, and knew not how. The spring was small in the beginning, scarce discernible. I looked, indeed for the kingdom of heaven to come with observation, but it came not so; and as it was sown with little din and noise, so did it grow up quietly, and had many interruptions and winters, going backward and forward; like the filling sea, some wave gained ground, and some succeeding lost and abated, but a new overflowing regained all again. There would come a wave of the Spirit that would overflow largely, but after that a little ebb; and then, when I little expected, there would come a wave that would set me as far forward as ever again: and then a little decay, and then a recovery, so as for a long time I was tossed up and down like a locust, wearied of myself, and of my life, and righteousness, and enlargements of heart, and of all these glories. I was after humiliation of heart, by a strong yet quiet hand, at the command of God, with little din made to believe and rest on Christ, so as I had never done the same before; and in process of time to become assured, and so come to see myself in a good estate, and to have come off my way, and the Lord to have almost perfected His work, ere I had thought He had well begun. Nor all this time did I know what the Lord was doing until of late; but thinking I was minting to enter in at the strait gate, and "ever learning, and never able to attain to the knowledge of the truth." And now I see that all this time the Lord carried me as an eagle doth her young ones, Duet. xxxii. 10, 11, 12. And when the Lord was leaving, and His work going back in mine eyes, yet was it going forward. The way and steps of this my recovery were:

1. STEP I.—After I had long departed from God, and so gone far away, the Lord made me unsatisfied with and weary of my present condition; and even in this laughing madness was my heart sorrowful. And when in midst of my jollity, if at any time I would think on my former estate, I would say, Oh what a sad condition am I in now! Oh the days of old! "Oh that it were with me as in months past!" Oh that I were under Christ's terrors again! His glooms and boasts were better than this at best, Hos. ii. 7, "better when with the first husband." I remembered whence I had fallen, aud this dung out the bottom of my carnal contentments.

2. STEP II.—I had thoughts to return to my first husband, but was beaten from this with the apprehensions that it was not time; and hence it became a great case to me, whether the Lord may assault a soul with a spirit of conviction, and leave it, and come again? Rutherford had a terrible word, which haunted me like a ghost, viz., "A man is saved in the nick of conversion, or else eternally lost." Sometimes I thought I was judicially hardened, and my time gone; but the Lord did take the thorn away, and made me hope, by casting a book in my hand which did write of compunction; and he states the case, viz., "Whether a man once under convictions, and these dying without fruit, can be again converted?" He determined it affirmatively,

with such reasons as then convinced me, so as I resolved to set up shop again, and try it, Ezra x. 2, 3, though I found therein a great difficulty.

3. Step III.—Was the setting about the means, with prayer, reading, and meditation. I rested not in bare fruitless wishings and hopes, but I was helped to set myself to seek the Lord, and set up shop again, though with some difficulty; the irons were rusted. I continued praying morning and evening for some time, and meditating, and preparing my heart, notwithstanding all my discouragements, and indispositions, and little success; for my heart continued hard, dead, and blind, and conversation carnal, and duties were a burden to me.

4. Step IV.—Having for some twenty days prayed, mourned, and complained, and not finding any life, but my deadness increasing, and hearing no word of Christ, I began to have suspicions that sentence was indeed past against me, and that I was sealed under the plague of an hard heart, and that Christ had given over; and was tempted to cast aside duties as vain. And then I said, Oh poor soul! thou wilt never get so much as a tender heart again, nor so much as once to pour out this thy soul to God ere thou die. While I was thus exercised, the Lord was pleased to let me again taste some of the sweetness of duties; for one time I went in the multitude of my thoughts to the Lord in prayer, and it pleased the Spirit to blow, and to open my heart, so as I prayed with abundance of tears and great liberty and I found much sweetness in the work. Now, although I was not satisfied with this, yet I was comforted, in that it was a proof to me that the Lord had not quite forsaken me, and that after this there would come better.

5. Step V.—I began then to fall more closely to work, and to put other sails on, and more irons in the fire; for then did I write diaries, make vows and covenants, and to fall to the work of self-examination, and to write some infant notions of practical divinity, and my medita-

tions on several texts, which did me good, and at first helped me forward, and suited me well.

6. Step VI.—The Lord by duties wearied me with them, and mortified me to my self-righteousness, and did with labour bring down my heart. 1*st*, He discovered unto me and let me feel the evil and power of my heart. Then did I groan under the burden of a dead, blind, and carnal heart, and the body of death was my great exercise, and heart-ills, especially hardness of heart. And thus more sensibly than ever I was wearied and burdened with my heart, though not in horror. 2*dly*, The Lord let me see the sinfulness of all my duties and best actions; the formality, lifelessness, and corrupt principles whence they proceeded, and my great shortcomings, so as I knew these were not my Saviours, and turned mine eyes from them. 3*dly*, I was wearied and loadened with myself, my sins, and duties, trailed through various dispensations, and burdened with feckless labour. I saw I could not put my heart in a frame, nor keep my heart in a frame when it was in it, but still did break my resolutions. My duties, they yielded neither peace nor satisfaction, nor did they mortify sin; for I was but rowing against the stream, and after a long time worse in my own conceit than before. I was dying sometimes, and living again; when like to die, the Lord would look upon me, and put it in my heart to seek Him, and would send down influences, and enlarge my soul with love and desires after Himself, and sorrow for sin, and new resolutions; and this would quicken me for a while, and make me hope and seek the Lord. And then again the Lord would depart, and my soul would be overclouded, and I would turn unwatchful, and fall to my ordinary sins, and depart from the Lord, and sin in words. And with this I was vexed, because my resolutions were broken; and I was discouraged, and despaired ever to come up; and was weakened, thinking, how shall I look the Lord in the face? What security can I now give Him for my behaviour? Until at last that no frame or duty could give me comfort

at all. And, when my heart was enlarged, I said, I have enough of delusions, let me alone. Yet, whilst thus discouraged, not knowing what to do, and unable to think of what might do me good, God would shine in upon my soul; and among a hundred visits of this kind He gave me, and by which He many times restored my dying-out heart to life, He was pleased still to come out and create a new thing, some new ground, and the floods would still increase. How often have I said, Now, sure the Lord will come, and will not tarry; now I shall keep fast what I have. But I was deceived; "All flesh is grass, and the glory thereof withereth." I have said sometimes in my extremity, Now, what is it that can quicken me? Surely I can never recover out of this, though God should open windows in heaven. Then would the Lord show His power and condescendency, and would quicken me and put away my fears, and make me look cheerful, and cause me to put on new resolutions. In a word, I was thus wearied and burdened in a wilderness for the space of three full years, and poured from vessel to vessel.

7. Step VII.—When all failed, and that I was at the point of dying, the Lord would send some extraordinary thing, some fit word, some good book, that would quicken me and strengthen me sometimes to spend half nights in prayer. Sometimes, meeting with other Christians, the Lord would rain some seasonable word; and nothing did me more good than stories relating to God's dealings with others. Likewise, being in the South, the Lord trysted me with a powerful New Testament ministry, which did keep in my dying life, and greatly encouraged me; many a time was my swooning life revived, and I brought from the gates of death. Yet these waterings insensibly sanctified me more and more both in heart and conversation, and made heavenly things relish with my soul; and by them I was made more capable to receive the Lord, and my eyes therewith kept waking. And this I look upon as my wilderness condition.

8. Step VIII.—The Lord having fully wearied me with my sins, heart, duties and enlargements, and poured me from vessel to vessel; and looking for help in and from another, he did next humble me. For after all this there remained a pride of heart, which kythed not in the estimation I had of my self-righteousness, but in the frowardness of my will, which would not submit to such searchings, but secretly fretted and murmured, like these, Prov. xix. 3. I thought God made it all His work to cross me, and hence was disquieted with falls, and not kindly humbled; and withal, some murmuring at the Lord's delays. For one day reading on the Sabbath afternoon on Shepherd's "Sound Believer," after I had come very unprofitably from sermon, and withal discouraged, being August 1660; the place I read on was of the nature of humiliation, and how the Lord works it in His elect (by convincing the soul of the equity of God's proceeding with it, and thereby the soul is made quietly and willingly to bear what the Lord pleaseth to determine anent it, without repining or murmuring), in reading of which, and of His motives and reasons of submission, the Lord opened my eyes, and bowed my heart, so as I saw his equity in His dealing towards me, and complied in my will and affections to His dealings, submitting myself to Him without quarrelling or murmuring, in another way and manner than ever I did before. 1*mo*, I saw clearly and rationally the Lord's equity, and absolute dominion He hath over all, to do with them as He pleaseth; and that He did nothing with me but what was fitting, Lam. i. 18; Dan. ix. 7; Jer. xii. 1. The murmurings and swellings of my heart were quieted and calmed; I was no more like the raging sea, but in a calm and quiet frame, like one newly cooled out of a raging fever, Lam. iii. 28; Lev. x. 3; Psal. xxxix. 9. I disputed now no more against God or His proceedings. 2*do*, My heart, even my affections, were made to comply with my present dispensations; I did willingly bear the yoke, Mich. vii. 9; Lam. iii. 28; so that I was satisfied with whatever came to pass; "It is the Lord," etc.

3*tio*, I did put myself in His will, to do to me as it seemed good; so as, if He put me in hell, I should not murmur nor complain of injustice, 2 Sam. xv. 26. This was wrought in a low measure, and did proceed more from the sense of God's sovereignty than of His justice, and was rather negative in not murmuring, than positive in a hearty compliance with evils. And thus was the frame and work of humiliation wrought in me; and I continued herein for a month, suffering every thing, and doing what the Lord required.

9. STEP IX.—After I was in this low measure humbled, I proceeded another step, even to resign myself to the Lord. It was occasioned by reading a sermon of Mr Andrew Gray's, on these words, "My son give Me thy heart." I was made to comply with that command, so as, though I could not say I was quite conquered by the love of Christ so fully to give up myself, yet through sense of want and misery, and some old love to Christ, and withal hoping it might be a mean to do me good, and willing to comply with a command, I did legally and affectionately dispone my heart to Christ. "O Lord," said I, "though I cannot command this evil heart to love Thee, nor myself to serve Thee; yet, if I have power or right of it, I here legally renounce that right in Thy favours, and by these presents make over myself to Thee, and all that is within me. Now, Lord, take me at my word, and take advantage of this to claim me as Thine own; accept the real motions of my will. Oh that Christ would now look on me as His, and pretend right to me, and make use of this right!" In the strength of this I walked for some time, though it did not always satisfy. For I could not believe that though I was sincere and affectionate in this, that ever my disposition could give Christ a right to me, unless He likewise did accept it. "Lord, Thou offerest Thyself to me (said I), and I cannot take Thee; Lord, I likewise offer myself to Thee, Thou mayest take me, but wilt not. Oh! others take advantage of my bargains; Oh that Christ would do so, and challenge a claim and right to me! Lord, Thou sayest Thou art

willing to do me good; Lord, I offer myself to Thee to do with me what Thou wilt; only let me not be guided by myself." Here came I, and I did stick and wrestle for some time striving to come forth. This was in July, and I continued till the latter end of August thus.

SECTION II.

Relating some things touching my humiliation and wilderness condition.

1. The frame and exercise of my heart while in this condition was, 1*mo*, I found great deadness and hardness of heart; and this I mourned under, as my greatest evil. I now thought I could never win to be so sensible of my condition as I ought to be, and in my heart I desired a law-work again. 2*do*, I was in great blindness and distance with Christ, and therefore much lamented my ignorance of Him; and therefore was unsatisfied with my greatest attainments, in respect I saw not Himself; or, if I did, it was very darkly. 3*tio*, I wanted assurance, and was in the dark as to my interest, and rather was inclined to think myself not converted than converted, and was seeking and hoping for something; and any thing I met with made me rejoice, as it was an evidence of some good to come to me, rather than as it was a token of any good already gotten. I had no foundations settled. 4*to*, I was inconstant; my goodness was as the morning dew, so as my great complaints were, that my heart would not retain or keep the divine impressions that were on it now and then, Hos vi. 4. 5*to*, I was full of unbelief, constructing hardly of God and of His ways, and of myself; which unbelief, though as yet I saw it not as a sin, yet did me much evil. I thought ill that I was delivered from my terrors, Exod. xvii. 3. 6*to*, I was tormented with this, that I met not with that sweetness and fellowship in ordinances as I desired, but barren for the most part to my soul; not being thankful for the day of small things,

such as quickening, healing encouragement, and comfort; and not humbled for wants when nothing was spoken to me. 7*mo*, There was security and unwatchfulness, whereby my heart was ready to grow careless, by which I continually fell to some sins of conversation, which did break my peace.

2. I ordinarily then slipped in these sins, which did break my peace: 1*mo*, Departing from God in heart, in turning secure and careless, and suffering my heart, to go out of all tune, through not walking as in the sight of God. 2*do*, Sensuality in the immoderate use of comforts, being naturally given to appetite. 3*tio*, Idle, vain words, and vain conversation. 4*to*, Unprofitable spending of time, and not improving opportunities and occasions of good, letting my generation-work lie by. 5*to*, Carnality in all my actions, civil and Religious, not doing things spiritually. 6*to*, Sloth in going about the means; beside the inward evils of pride, murmuring, and unbelief, and want of love and fear.

3. But as the Lord showed kindness to His people in the wilderness, notwithstanding all their provocations, so did He to me: and I observed His love during this time in several particulars; 1*mo*, When I was in hazard to sleep the sleep of death, and to depart from the Lord through my discouragements and plagues of heart, evil and carnal company; what mercy was it, to clear me from my discouragements, to take me to the wilderness from the crowd of the world, and against the stream of indispositions, sloth, and discouragements; to persuade and make me return and seek the Lord in the use of all means, "if so be there might be hope," when I had no mind of it, nor heart to it? How did he convince me that my time was not yet gone; that when I was departed, and like to fall, nay, far gone in a consumption of which I would have died, that I should be prevented and healed, and that He should renew His kindness, and would not let me depart for ever, but stirred me up to seek the Lord? He "found me in a howling wilderness," ready to perish, gasping out my last, Duet. xxxii. 10.

There had I perished for ever; but the Lord made a second voyage for me, He "came to seek and to save that which was lost." 2*do*, What love and mercy was in this, that when through sense of deadness, spiritual wilderness-wants, fierce tentations, and great darkness, I was ready to go back unto Egypt, or to faint in the way, that He should have given me water out of the rock, and should by visitations have upholden my spirit, and by these encouraged me, and kept in my dying life, training me on piece and piece? 3*tio*, But Oh! what shall I think of His continued mercy, His being ever with me? Though I was wild, weak, and unworthy, and sinful, and ever destroying myself; yet all my steps were guided by Him, He was ever with me, pitying me, ever sparing me, ever relieving in my extremity, and preventing my utter ruin; so that all this time He was with me in love, long-suffering, pity, and goodness, when I could not shift for myself at all. How long did I "stay in the place of the breaking forth of children," and was no way profitable to Him at all, doing no good in the world, and through unbelief constructing all to the worst? Yet was He still with me, and never left me until He had brought me unto a "Rock higher than I." Oh what unwearied pains and cost was He at! Oh shall I ever forget His condescendency! I thought ill that mine evils came through mine own default. For though I should turn dead and God had left me, if I had then been on my watch-tower I would not care; but the Lord would have my restoration of free grace from Himself. Readily then I would say, it was my waiting, and watching, and diligence, that did recover me; Oh not! but when sinful, when asleep, when given over, He would come, that it might appear, "not for your sakes do I this, but for My name's sake." There was not only wisdom, power, and pity, but likewise a coming over my sins, and great mercy; and now I think it no worse, and no less comfortable, that my mercies had His name engraven on them, even His grace, though there be no such ground for boasting. I was indeed the bush burning, and not consumed, Lord, "What is man, that Thou lookest on him, and visitest him every morning?" Job vii. 17, 18.

4. I remember, when I came to Edinburgh first, and not having room to pray, and likewise overcome with discouragements, not seeing an end of my labours, I began to faint and weary; and the Lord let me alone for a while, and I grew worse and worse. Until one Sabbath-day I went to hear an able minister, and much cried up; but there was such a throng that I could not get him heard, nor to any other church in the town; only I stumbled at last in the English church which was then in the town, with no great hope to get any good. The minister preached on these words, "A bruised reed will He not break." What shall I say? The Lord assisted him with such power, and he spoke so seasonably to me, that I was again revived and set in the way, and resolved to hold on till I should find the Lord; yea, it was then that I had some thoughts that I was converted, and some of my ordinary objections were answered.

5. I began again to faint and depart, because I thought never one was in my condition. And, being in a conference with a godly man, he told me the history of his conversion, and what brave days he had seen, and how that nothing now was but deadness, carnality and unbelief. This had such influence, that again my heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord, and that I was not singular, but my case was common, and therefore resolved to seek the Lord. And at the same time I got in my hands a piece of Mr Shepherd's I had never seen before, which the Lord blessing, after some consideration I resolved once more to assault the city, and to beseech God more earnestly than ever I had done before, which I was helped in some measure to do, and found the profit of it.

6. A while after, fainting and giving over, I read on Mr Shepherd's "Sound Believer" concerning soul humiliation, where he speaks to this purpose: "One way by which the Lord Jesus (saith he) in the day of His power doth humble a poor sinner is, by letting him see the wildness of his own

heart and duties; whereby the soul thinks, can these that are so wild save me? And then (saith he) the soul thinks, though for the present I be not well, yet hopes it shall do better in process of time, and thereupon falls to afresh; but Christ loads and wearies the soul with duties; and, after all its labour, the soul findeth itself worse than before. And here again the soul falleth down, finding itself to row against both wind and tide." Well (quoth I), this is like me, and this is it which God is doing with me. But, alas! my heart is hard, and I never felt conviction and compunction yet; how can I be come to humiliation then? Well, I read further, until he brings the humbled soul to speak thus: "Oh miserable wretch that I am! never worse than now. Once I could mourn, and pray, and sorrow, and never well but when out of one duty into another; but now a dead, blind, hard heart seizeth upon me, so as I can get nothing done." Here I stopt, and said, Then blessed be the Lord, that hath not let me alone, but given me so much light as to discern my way, and where I am. And is God indeed humbling me, and preparing me for Christ? I see that God hath left me to my deadness, that the sense thereof might draw me to Christ; for, as the same author saith, "More are drawn to Christ under the sense of a dead, blind heart, than by all sorrows, humiliations, and terrors." I trust God, that hath begun the work, will finish it. I was wonderfully strengthened by this; it is good to be in God's hands, howsoever matters be. With these and the like was my spirit kept up in this wilderness.

7. I have been searching unto the Lord's ends in this to me, and am never more satisfied than when I conclude them to be:—1*mo*, That I might know all the evil in my heart, my weakness and sinfulness, that thereby I might be humbled, who have so often departed, and whose whole life was a grieving of God, Duet. viii. 2; Chron. xxxii. 31; John ii. 25. 2*do*, That I might thereby be made acquaint with the methods and way of conversion, with which, through my hasty incoming, I was not so well acquaint. God did now,

as it were, act over again conversion; He convinced me, not only of actual sins, but of heart-sins and heart-plagues, and of that fountain-sin of nature which continually departed from God, and fiercely resisted Him in all His ways; He convinced me that I could not help myself, and that neither prayers nor means could help me; that I could neither buy nor conquer heaven. He wearied me with duties and enlargements, and in the greatness of my way, and loaded me with the multitude of my counsels and inventions. At last He humbled me, and calmed me, and made me believe. So that I think the Lord designed to acquaint me with the method of conversion, that I might be the more enabled to edify others, Acts v. 32, being myself a witness, and not heard it only, but also felt and seen, that I might speak to this purpose, 1 John i. 1; Psal. xxxiv. 4, 6, 11. "Not ignorant of His devices," 2 Cor. ii. 11. 3*tio*, That God might do me much good in the end, of which I had promise given me, and rationably and seasonably borne in upon my spirit, from Duet. viii. 16, in one of my dolorous hours, Heb. xii. 11; Jer. xxv. 4. I indeed expect much good from all this preparation and hard beginning. 4*to*, I look upon this as the only way to preserve me from backsliding. By these means, and by empting me from vessel to vessel, came it to pass that mine eyes were kept waking, and from settling on my lees; for I might perceive by Scripture, and sad experience, that many were full of their own enlargements and graces, and so fixed as they thought they had no more ado, and, therefore, like that rich man, Luke xii., said, "Soul take thy rest, thou hast enough for many days." The foolish virgins thought their great business was done; by which means being, as they supposed, past all danger, they slumbered and slept, and through sloth lost all; and, being settled on their lees, lost all, and backslided and apostatised miserably, and lost all life. But the Lord kept mine eyes waking, and gave me still my hands full ado; and, when I would seek rest, the Lord, by a new storm, would awaken me again; when discouraged through fears, temptations, desertions, and sins, and so like to give over because no hope, then would the Lord revive; and when I would say, "It is good to be here, let us make tabernacles," then a cloud would come; so as, by lifting up, and casting down, I was daily kept in exercise, depending, praying, and fighting, Judges iii. 1; Psal. lxxiii. 3, 4, 5, 14; Jer. xlviii. 11; Psal. lv. 19; Job vii. 18. 5*to*, To manifest to me, and to give me experience of His love, condescendency, and constancy, who in all my ways was with me, and that has never left me until He had His work wrought in me, that preserved me in this great wilderness, that did bear with my manners there, that supplied me continually in my extremities, Duet. viii. 5. 6*to*, To beat me out of my self-righteousness, worthiness, and sense, that thereby I might be fastened on the "Rock higher than I," that finding no rest for the sole of my foot by duties and enlargements, but they decaying under me, I might seek rest where it might be found, Mat. xi. 28, that, these sandy foundations being razed, I might build on that which will endure for ever, and thereby stand out all storms; for these good moods I was in could not comfort me or uphold me when my conscience was distressed, nor yet could they maintain themselves, but still decayed. And, therefore, this not being my rest, I was to seek it another way, Jer. l. 6, and that I might know man's life is not upholden by means as by the Lord, in or without them: "Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." For this is natural to us, to depend upon what our eyes see, and not to look to Him who is invisible, who indeed is "all in all." Now, the insufficiency of duties and self-righteousness did appear by these things: 1*st*, I never had full peace by them in their best, nor could they answer all accusations; some bone was still sticking. 2*dly*, They could not give full satisfaction nor contentment; something was wanting; they were bread which satisfied not. 3*dly*, The roots of sin did not appear to be taken away, and there was but little advantage gotten against corruption, it appeared still in its strength;

and but very indiscernible growth in grace. 4*thly*, It could not hold out in temptations; but whenever there came a storm, I was dung on my back, giving all hopes over. 5*thly*, When deadness came, there was no substance in what I met with to quicken me, as I now find in the promises, and flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. 6*thly*, They could not last, but perished when I was revived; and, therefore, finding this and that I but spent my strength in vain for "bread that profiteth not," I was made dead to them, and had no comfort in them or from them, but in so far as they were appearances of Christ's coming, and did prognosticate that He was not far away; and therefore looked up for that bread which endureth for ever. Surely this is not my rest; I wanted security, satisfaction, and strength in all these things. The sixth end was, To break my pride and stubbornness, which did not kyth so much in good thoughts of myself (for I saw I was empty), but in this, in liking to save myself by my own strength, and means, and way. For when I was beat out of all this, I thought that if I would wait, and not depart wickedly from God, I should herein have peace; and, upon this, projected to myself certain rules by which to walk. This I put no question to do and keep, and was confident enough, and would have no other way but this, because this was my own choosing, and that with a secret end of exalting myself, and getting a name before God of a righteous person. But God seeing me, "set my heart as the heart of God," Ezek. xxviii. 2, and abhorring the pride thereof, did resist me continually; and what by desertions, what by temptations, did so order it, as I was unable to keep my resolutions, His counsel standing, and my resolutions falling; and, "in the thing wherein I dealt proudly, He was above me." I fell many times, nay, almost every time, through unwatchfulness; and this made me murmur and grieve more that my purposes were broken, and the building I had framed, like the spider's web, hurled down, than that God was dishonoured. Prov. xix. 3, My foolishness perverted my way, and my heart fretted against the Lord, and likewise fretted that, the case being so, He should punish. I gave no glory to God, who had "power over these plagues," Rev. xvi. 9. And, notwithstanding I fell, yet, like Tyrus, I would say, "I was God," to Him before whom I fell, Ezek. xxviii. 2, and would ever be trying to establish my own righteousness, not acknowledging mine own insufficiency, nor acknowledging that it is God that doth what He wills, and that none saith and it cometh to pass but God. And God by His providences did prove this, and made me like an ox eat grass; yet would I not be convinced that the Most High ruleth, and it is yet a part of my exercise to get quit of this spirit, Ezek. xxviii. 6, 9; Dan. iv. 25, 27; Exod. xviii. 11. And therefore it came to pass that the Lord did constantly crush me in my will and resolutions. And, when He was pleased to show mercy, it was neither in the time, way, or manner when I either resolved to have it, or expected, or desired; and all this to let me know that the Most High directeth the ways of man, and that grace is a man's best charter, and to bow and break this will to submit to God in all dispensations, and to be carried to my journey's end what way soever He pleased, though through mire and dirt, Ezek. xx. 32, "That which cometh in your thoughts shall not at all be."

8. From which I observe this: 1*mo*, That folk may contract by backsliding what they will not in a very long time recover again, and the dregs of it may remain after they are, indeed, begun to return to the Lord; it is not easy to twin with sin, Josh. xxii. 17. The iniquity of Baal-peor, though long since contracted, and much cost wared on it, yet [is] not purged away until this day. The security and indispositions I then contracted, I am not free from yet. 2*do*, A man's whole life is but a conversion; and the Lord, after every kind of backsliding, draws after the same way as at the first conversion, yea, and deals so with them as they may seem never to have been converted before, Mat. xviii. 3. Yea, I found a more distinct preparatory work after my first drawing than ever before. For the Lord did things in a clap at first, and

in a very little time did let me see that I was undone, that I was not converted, nor could convert myself; and the insufficiency of duties, and an unconverted condition, with God's wrath, had some impressions on my spirit. And then the Lord revealed Christ unto me, on whom I believed, and with whom I closed. But now the Lord did draw me very clearly, and did insist in every step so, as that all the knowledge I have of the work of preparations, I have it from what I met with after I knew Christ, more than from what I met with at first. 3*tio*, The strongest, last, and bitterest enemy the Lord hath, and which He abhorreth most, is spiritual pride; against this He setteth Himself mainly; I mean, the vain-glorious confidence folk have in their own strength, and to be saved by their own righteousness, and to have their own wills fulfilled. It is hard to get our high conceits down, and it is hard to get the will broken to be submissive to the Lord's will in all dispensations, and it is hard to get folk to glorify God, and make use of His righteousness, Ezek. xxviii. 9; Prov. xix. 3. It is easy to let a man see he is not converted, that he cannot save himself; but it is hard persuading him that he can do nothing, not so much as to be thankful for the least mercy. Ye will not persuade him to live, and live only in, to, and by another, and submit himself, his will, in all things, to God; and with a holy contentedness to submit to have his resolutions broken, and God glorified; and contented and satisfied in this, that the counsel of the Lord hath taken effect. 4*to*, It is the frequency and constancy of God's waterings that doth good, rather than any measure of a particular fit or visitation; and from this more love may be gathered, John xv. 7, "If My words abide in you." "He that endureth to the end shall be saved." Balaam had a strange fit. These waterings, through their frequency and constancy, in process of time did good, did sanctify, did humble, did make me delight in duty, and draw to God, and from the world. "*Gutta cavat lapidem, non vi, sed sæpe cadendo*," Hosea iii. 3, "Thou shalt abide for Me many days." And that which cometh by degrees hath most last. 5*to*, Unwatchfulness is a constant and only evil, prejudicial to a progress in grace, Mat. xxvi. 41. 6*to*, "Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." I owe any thing that was wrought in me to His grace and goodness, and not to my own resolutions, nor to any means whatsomever. "O people saved by the Lord!" I did by many experiences find a horse a vain help. 7*mo*, Folk, in returning to God, are drawn by degrees, by little and little, and not all at once. As first, to put in their heart to seek God, then a remissness, then a turning more serious, then to find more sweetness in the Lord and His ways. "By little and little will I drive them out." And, therefore, folk may be converted, though they remember not of any special day, that might be as a time to pass reckoning upon; do as ye may, and be drawn according to God's will, who "leads the blind in a way that they know not." 8*vo*, The way to heaven is a tedious, wearisome, narrow, and straight gate, even a terrible and great wilderness, Duet. viii. 15, that heaven may be the sweeter when it comes. Oh how much need of patience is there! and what thankfulness owe we, when we come to any place where there are fountains of water! Let us not think strange if thus we find it. 9*no*, There is not, possibly, in some, so much sensible joy as at their first conversion, of which many reasons may be given; no such singing as when brought out of Egypt; the fatted calf is slain at first, Luke xv. 23. The gold and prize is seen at the break of the race, and at the race's end; folk have most need of it then. They were not sent to the war the first year. 10*mo*, All must be in some measure humbled ere they get any good; meekened and made silent before, and submissive to God, Lev. xxvi. 41. 11*mo*, All exercises as to circumstances are not alike in Christians; one Christian's pace is not a method or a rule for another. 12*mo*, There may be a wearying and loading, and real humiliation, though there be no terrors on the soul. 13*tio*, Sense of a dead, hard heart is an effectual means to draw to Christ, yea, and more effectual than any other can be, because "dead, miserable, and naked," Rev. iii. 18. 14*to*, God is ever carrying on His work in a soul, or in a kingdom, though we do not always perceive it: for He carries it on insensibly; the seed grows, and thou knowest not how; He hath His way in the storms: "I girded thee with strength, though thou knewest not." Yea, when we think He is standing still, or going backward, yet He is going forwards. 15*to*, Hope is the first step of recovery, and all the sorrows of the elect have hope in them; therefore, let every one labour to settle this well, Ezra x. 2, "There is hope, therefore let us turn." 16*to*, The beginnings of grace are very small, poor, and unpromising, like a grain of mustard seed, Mat. xiii. 31; Ezek. xlvii. 3, 4, 5.

SECTION III.

How I was drawn to God, and made to close with Him by faith.

For any thing I could learn of myself, or discern, I had the seeds of grace and faith before this time; but yet I lived more by sense than any other way, and therefore I fell and rose as sense was up or down, and so never came to any settlement, like a wave tossed up and down. And so the Lord, intending to settle me, did beat me from sense, and made me learn a more excellent way, even to live by faith. I knew there was a rest, whereof I knew little; only I thought it was an estate of constant joy and life, wherein the Spirit would evermore triumph against the flesh, and wherein all actings would be pure and cleanly. And thus, like the Jews and disciples, I dreamed of a heaven on earth, though not of an earthly kingdom. But that which was indeed my rest, to which he that believeth hath entered in, I never so much as dreamed of it: for I thought faith was some extraordinary rapture, and seeing of Christ with great fulgor and glory; this I thought to be faith, or the ground of it. But the Lord came in the "calm voice," and Christ grew "like a tender plant out of a dry ground," Luke xvii. 20; Zech. iv. 6. And, indeed, the foundation of this second temple was far less glorious in appearance than the first. Oh how was I mistaken! It was less in my thoughts, that such a dead, blind, carnal, sinful soul should be called to believe and depend most confidently on Christ, and that without any sign from heaven, but upon the bare warrant of His word in Scripture. The way and the manner whereof, as I remember, I shall set down; which was the tenth and last step of my recovery.

1. Finding, therefore, no rest in my exercise of self-resignation for the causes above and formerly expressed, I began to be very sorrowful and disconsolate, and, like Pharaoh's chariots, to drive on heavily. I continued waiting in the means; and one day, as I was reading in my ordinary, I read these words in Hag. ii. 17, "I smote you in all the labour of your hands, yet ye turned not to Me, saith the Lord." I applied this spiritually; that is, thought I, God hath smitten me in all my labours, duties, resolutions, and vows, and for all this I turned not to God; but wherein am I not turned? Wherein shall I return? How so? Have I not left my sins, mourned, prayed, read, and meditated? What remains yet to be done? What duty or mean do I slight? What pains in my power have I withholden? I therefore cast mine eyes upon all duties; and, while I was thus searching, some blessed motion was suggested to me, That I had all my lifetime slighted the duty of believing, and had not turned to God by faith; and, therefore, until this thou do, God will ever continue in smiting thee in all the labours of thy hand, for "without faith, it is impossible to please God." And it hath been the want of this, and this only, that hath blasted thee in all thine endeavours. Faith, quoth I, astonished, what is this? What, me believe, that am so wild, so unprepared, so dead, so little prizing of Christ! It cannot be; Lord, now keep from a delusion. Yes, Faith, of which so much is spoken

in Scripture, of which thou knowest so little, that is the main grace, said the Spirit. These things made me some way apprehensive of the matter.

2. I, therefore, in the second place, was made to consider the matter, and I found that faith had a great place in religion ; and withal, looking to myself, I found that I had very little practised it, and was as great a stranger to it as these disciples, Acts xix. 1, 2, were to the knowledge of the Holy Ghost. I knew not what it was, nor had formerly exercised it, or distinctly and expressly heard of it, nay, knew not that it was my duty ; for this ill principle remained with me, viz., I believed that none should believe but persons so and so qualified, and that the ground thereof was some sensible manifestation of glory, which until I could find, I thought I was to lie in my prison and mourn, John xvi. 9.

3. The Lord did convince me fully that I should believe, and that it was the duty of every one. For, as I said before, I thought that only persons so and so qualified were bound to believe ; but the merciful Lord Himself did unloose this knot, by calling me to Him, convincing me that it was my duty so to do ; and thereby the chains wherewith Satan had for a long time bound me, and kept me from the distinct exercise and life of faith, were broken. And that which is wonderful is,—I heard it an hundred times pressed in sermons to believe, and yet until that day was never persuaded it was my duty to believe, nor never minded that exercise at all. The grounds whereby I was then persuaded to believe, or that believing was my duty, yea, and that all were bound to believe, which was the first point, were these : 1*st*, That Scripture, 1 John iii. 23, "This is His commandment, that ye believe on the name of the Son of God." Then it is commanded, concluded I ; and why is it not duty? Nay, is it not the great command? Dost thou question that prayer is thy duty? Truly it is thy duty, because commanded. Then faith, or receiving of Christ, being commanded likewise, it is thy duty as well

as prayer. 2*dly*, Wicked, unregenerate men are commanded to believe; and it is the great duty, more acceptable and well pleasing to God than any thou canst preform, John vi. 28, "What is the work of God, that we should work it?" The answer, verse 29th, was very contrary to their expectations and thoughts, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent;" this is the first, the great command, and a command tying graceless persons such as were the Jews. 3*dly*, That Scripture was brought to my mind, Rom. iv. 20, Abraham, "by believing glorified God," compared with Num. xx. 12, "Because ye believed not, to sanctify my name before this people, therefore ye shall not bring this people into the land promised." Now, seeing believing glorifies God, thou art bound unto it; for every man is bound to glorify God. Who questions this? Now, believing glorifies God, in acknowledging His power, goodness, and rich grace. 4*thly*, The Spirit urged this argument, the wicked are punished for not believing, therefore it is their duty to believe. See Psal. lxxviii. 32, 33, "He consumed their days in vanity, because they believed not on Him;" and so shall He do with thee if thou do not believe. 5*thly*, This was confirmed to me by the first Scripture, and by the language of some providences. What else could I call my continual disappointments, and fruitless labours, but a call to me to try what this might do? My days were consumed, and therefore by my stroke I might read my sin.

4. The Lord having by these persuaded and convinced me that it was my duty to believe, and rolled this stone away from the sepulchre; He proceeded next to answer my manifold objections, which then did begin to swarm and keep me from believing. The main were, 1*st*, I cannot believe; and, therefore, why am I called to believe? It is the gift of God, and why should I hammer out a faith of my own bowels? This will not be accepted. It was answered, the Lord, by thus drawing and inviting thee, gives thee power to come, as it was when He called on dead Lazarus

to live and come forth. And, besides, thou canst not sanctify a Sabbath, nor pray; yet it is thy duty, and thou goest about it as thou canst. So do here. Yea, to the wearied and loadened, and called thus, it is not impossible. A second objection was, I fear I may presume. It was answered, to believe, in obedience to a command, is no presumption. When thou receivest Christ, and in this act believest on and restest in Him for pardon, this being obedience cannot be presumption, for it is no persumption to obey God; to believe uncalled is presumption or unwarrantable. Objection 3*rd*, I am not enough humbled, my heart is dead and hard, and I am altogether insensible of my condition; and, therefore how can I be called to believe? for it is the "weary and heavy ladened" that are called to come. It was answered, it may be so, but this gives no right to come; it is the call and command of God, and Gospel-offers, which gave a right, and not any qualification. And besides, I read in Mr Gray at the same time, that those that are wearied and loadened are rather those that will come, than those that ought to come. Thou art miserable, and naked, and wild; all is true. But how can it be otherwise, when thou hast lived at such a distance with Christ who is the fountain of life? If thou wouldst believe, He would give thee what thou wantest; there is no other way of receiving life but by coming to Him, John v. 40. Objection 4*th*, But I cannot prize Christ, nor am I prepared. It was answered, that as faith fetches all from Him, so fetches it prizing of Him too; for if faith fetches all from Christ, then it brings nothing to Christ but deadness, blindness, and sinfulness. Come to Him for grace to prize Him; if thou once wouldst believe, then Christ would be precious to thee, 1 Pet. ii. 7. Emptiness is the best qualification; "The hungry He filleth with good things, but the rich He sendeth away empty." There is no more required than what makes thee be willing to accept Him; if, therefore, thou be willing to accept Christ, thou prizeth Him sufficiently, and art sufficiently prepared. Objection 5*th*, Thou findest no glorious power drawing thee. It was answered, yet I find the Lord in His Word really calling me, and this is as sufficient a ground to thee as though He came personally and visibly here and desired this of thee; and, therefore, do now what thou wouldst do then. His Word is the "more sure word of prophecy," surer than the voice that came down from heaven. Objection *6th*, But I find no good after I believe. It was answered, no more do saints at first, Hos. vi. 2, "After two days will He come and revive us." It is not by coming to Him, but by "abiding in Him," that fruit is brought forth. I confess, by the answering of these objections, and by other arguments, the Lord did sensibly and seasonably, and with a strong hand, convince me that it was my duty to believe. Oh will He take such a vile worm as I! Yes, He will; for thou art the fittest person in the world for Him to glorify His grace on. The Lord did incessantly follow me with these thoughts, yea, I found a sensible power dealing with me.

5. The Lord did not only draw me to conclude that believing was my duty, and answered my objections; but by other arguments persuaded me to go about this duty of believing on and closing with Christ. The main motives were, *1st*, Dost thou not see how earnest God is with thee? He commands, invites, threatens thee; hath at last opened thy blind eyes to let thee see thy duty, loosed all thy objections, and hath now this long time waited on thee. Oh! open at last, and yield to His importunity, Rev. iii. 20. *2dly*, Know it, if thou wilt not answer, and quickly answer, God will away and leave thee, and there will be no more knocking, but all this work shall die, and thou shalt never be converted, Prov. i. 24–33. *3dly*, There is nothing more pleasing to God than believing. Behold how the angels are expecting and wishing in their hearts that now there may be a match made, Luke xv. 7, and ii. 13. This will please the Lord for all the ills that thou hast done Him; nothing thou canst do can be so pleasing to Him; for this is the end of all dispensations, and the great command.

Now, make amends for all ye have done, John vi. 28. 4*thly*, Consider the duty itself; it is the giving of thy heart to Christ, and receiving of Him, and believing in Him. Hath He been at such pains, and taken thy rotten righteousness away, and now comes and offers Himself to thee, beseeches thee to love Him, looses all thy objections? Oh! slight not this great salvation. Slight any duty, but trample not on love; love for love is the least that can be given, Heb. ii. 3. 5*thly*, "Without faith, it is impossible to please God." Pray, suffer, and do what thou wilt, all is abomination if not in faith; I care for nothing if this be wanting, saith the Lord, Heb. xi. 6. 6*thly*, The sorest punishments are abiding unbelief; and, therefore, if thou refuse this offer, all thy sins that ever thou didst, thy blasphemy, Sabbath-breaking, etc., will be but as flea-bites to this, Acts xiii. 41. It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for thee. Better never have prayed, but lived a profane Atheist, than come this length and stick; God will go away shortly, and thou shalt wander and decay, and one to a hundred but thou sin that sin against the Holy Ghost, Heb. vi. 6, for never wast thou indeed enlightened till now; and now refuse, and let this heat cool, and thou mayest be hardened. 7*thly*, Consider, if Christ were now in thy chamber, and were bidding and entreating thee with tears in His eyes to receive Him, and offering Himself to thee, and saying to thee, O thou wretchedest of sinners, by all these sorrows I endured for thee, I adjure thee grieve Me no more with thine unbelief, but receive Me and My offers, and so glorify My grace. Wouldst thou not do it, and wonder at this love? Oh Christ doth it as really now, Rom. x. 8, "The Word is near thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart." 8*thly*, Consider what thou shalt have by this. Thou shalt get life, light, rest, and consolation; and that which in vain thou hast been seeking by thy own righteousness, thou shalt by faith get, nay, be able to work impossible things; thy dead heart shall live, thy blind eyes shall see Him, thy lame hands and feet shall leap and work, and by this way only shalt thou have peace. With these and the like arguments did the Lord court my soul to Himself.

6. The Lord did by suitable providences back the call of His Word upon my Spirit; for on a day of private humiliation it was my ordinary to read Heb. xi. and First Epistle of Peter, where so much is spoken of faith. The Lord likewise made Shepherd's "Sound Believer" useful to me, which till now I perceived I never understood; then all Scriptures concerning faith, and treatises speaking thereof, and meditations of it, were sweet, which now I began something to understand. I was now come as it were to a new world, and there was such a stir upon my spirit as I never found the like before. Fain would I believe, but, ah, I could not! I found a spirit of resistance, there was a blindness upon my eyes; I knew not what believing was, nor on whom. On the one hand, the Lord by His commands, motives, earnest and real invitations, promises, and answering objections, yea, and terrible threatenings in case of unbelief, hastening me and pushing me forward, and that speedily; for all doors were shut but this of faith. For I could neither pray nor do anything, in respect of the sinfulness of it without faith, and therefore this behoved to be my first work. On the other hand, ignorance of Christ, and of the duty of believing, and fear of presumption, and believing on my own strength, did toss me like a ball; I knew not what to do, but like a weak child stuck in the birth. Oh, said I, how can I believe! "Lord, help my unbelief," and pity me, Thou that hast been with me so wonderfully through the great and terrible wilderness, and brought me even to the borders of the good land; Oh help here. Sometimes I would think it were better I had never come this length. My greatest objection was, that I did not see the glory of Christ; and though I should believe, yet without this it would not be an effectual believing, and so would prove but a dead faith; and likewise, I knew not what faith was. Well, said the Lord, do but rely on Christ for life and

affection with some confidence that He will help thee, and I seek no more. In this and to this I found some strength, and then I endeavoured it, and said, behold, I come to Thee, Lord; do not thou cast me off. But the Lord said, come not only to see what Christ will do with thee, but likewise rest upon and believe from His goodness, that He will do all that thou standest in need of. Well, then, answered my heart, since it is so, I will take my hazard, and on Thee I cast myself, come of it what will. And verily that which seemed in my most serious exercise to be the notion of faith by which I closed with Christ was, a certain kind of persuation and rest in it, that I had, the Lord would do me good, and help me in all things. And the great thing that was pressed upon me was, not to doubt of Christ, especially His good-will; in which in some measure I rested.

7. I was afterward more confirmed in this; for in this case I continued for fourteen days much after one way, still looking for some great thing, but found nothing. And then a new objection came in, which was this, though it was my duty to believe, yet, if I had really believed, there would something have followed; but Oh! I find nothing after my closing. Surely I have laid my pipes short of the fountain; I am as blind, as dead, as unholy as ever. I will to my prison again, till Christ Himself come and redeem me with a strong hand; for it seems I have come forth without a warrant, and so I became discouraged, and did pull up the roots and razed the foundations again. But the Lord trysted me with a suitable word from Mr Shepherd to this objection, showing that a soul may come to Christ, and yet at first find nothing; and then, saith he, the same reason (viz., emptiness) that moved thee to come, the same should make thee stay with Christ; and it is usual with the Lord's people to get nothing at first, Hos. vi. 1, "Let us return unto the Lord, for He will heal us." Oh, say they, we got nothing, we find no healing or life No, saith he, though the first day ye get nothing, nor yet the next, yet "after two days He will revive us, and the third day we will stand up

in His sight." This cured the wound something; but the fresh apprehensions of presumption and catching hold on a lie, with the sense of unworthiness, and believing in my own strength, did, like a violent storm, raze all foundations, so as through pettishness, fear, unbelief, and impatience, I said, I will to my prison again, I will pluck up my anchor again; and, therefore, resolved I would make a doleful and heavy complaint to God. But, when I was going to my knees, ere ever I had spoken a word to the Lord, it was suggested to me thus: Dost thou think, seeing thou rejectest My Son, and wilt not trust in Him, that ever thy peeping or sorrows will be accepted by Me? Is not every thing that is not done in faith abomination? Thou mayest well think by prayer to offend God more, but never think that the Lord henceforth will do any thing for thee, seeing there is no faith; for God hears no prayers but in Christ. I saw by this a necessity of believing, and doing what I could. Well, said I, O Lord, since it is so, that I must of necessity believe, against sense and reason, and as I can, I do lippen my soul to Thee, and trust Thou wilt save me from all my sins; and though this be counted presumption, yet I will trust in Him. And was much strengthened herein from Job xiii. 15, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him;" though all things seem to cry despair and die, and though for my presumption He should kill me, yet I will trust in Him; and now, Lord, since I have sealed this bargain, and closed with Thee, send strength, not for any thing in me, but because now I am Thy servant, that I may honour Thee, my Master.

8. I had no sooner spoken these words, but the Lord revealed Himself and His love, by the evidence of my sincerity in that petition, wherein I perceived, that, laying aside mine own cause, I sought grace to honour Him; and by this seal of the Spirit I became assured with joy and peace. I am not selfish, said I, in seeking grace; I seek it for Christ's ends, to honour Him; therefore I have been sincere, and helped to believe. Then were my eyes opened

to see love in all dispensations. Oh this was a heart-ravishing consideration! The Lord, that followed me many a weary day, never rested till He had completed His work with me, and till He had engaged me to believe. Oh the love of Christ! If Christ had no power to help a poor sinner, but had love, He would even die over it, such is His love.

9. I was thinking whether this was but a common work, or was it special saving grace? and I am induced to believe and to think it a saving sincere faith, by these grounds: 1*st*, It was a faith wrought by the Lord Himself, though small, and weak; it was a faith of the operation of God, Eph. i. 19, 20, and ii. 8; Col. ii. 12. It was not of my own making and devising; and I shall not think that a presumption which He warranted me to do, and which I did in obedience to His command, nor that a delusion which His Spirit wrought. 2*dly*, It was grounded on the Word, not on sense; on the Word of His command, Eph. ii. 20, and it is no presumption to believe what He commands. 3*dly*, It "purified the heart," and made me prize and desire grace, and made me desire that mainly for Christ's ends, to honour Him, Eph. i. 13; Acts xv. 9; 1 John iii. 3. 4*thly*, It filled me with "joy and peace," Rom. v. 2, 3, 4; 1 Pet. i. 8, so as I was satisfied with my condition, and went about the fields singing songs of triumph over Satan. Oh, said I, did I ever see this day, or expect to see it? 5*thly*, I was fitted and prepared for it; for it was after much humiliation, burdening, and wearying, Mat. xi. 28. 6*thly*, It strengthened me; for I cried out, what shall I now do for the Lord, who hath heard my sorrows and afflictions? This "joy of the Lord was my strength," Neh. viii. 10; Prov. xvii. 22. 7*thly*, It made the Lord Jesus precious; I was made to see a glory, an excellency, and loveliness in Him. And it is a token of a sound faith that exalts Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 7. 8*thly*, I was made to resolve to pay my vows which I made in afflictions and straits, once when at the college under convictions, and another time in confirmation of this

when in the wilderness, which was this—that if the Lord would deliver me out of that condition in which I was, and give me assurance of His love, and acquaint me in some measure with the ways of God and Christian exercises, especially faith and patience, that thereby I might better inform others, and that before I was twenty-five years of age, that then, if I were in the kingdom, I should serve Him in the ministry. The Lord heard me, so as I thought I was bound. Then did I set myself wholly to serve the Lord. And in this frame I continued for a week, though not in that ecstacy of joy, yet in that peace and tranquillity of mind; my heart, being stayed by faith, was kept in perfect peace, which, through my dying, vanishing frame of spirit, it could never be.

10. Yet notwithstanding, this faith had many cracks in it, and many defects, which encouraged Satan to make an assault, which he made thereafter. It had these imperfections, 1*st*, Less discovered of the power of God in making me close with the promise, than in discovering my duty, and inclining me to believe. There was much of this faith wrought by my own power, which made Satan brangle it upon this very head. 2*dly*, I secretly rested, after I believed, in the act of faith rather than in the object of faith, and drew comfort from this more than from the object—Christ holden out in the Gospel. 3*dly*, I was more convinced that believing was my duty, than I understood what believing was; the equity of believing appeared, but not the rationality. I was not so convinced of the grounds of believing; and therefore was I confused, and utterly at a loss what to believe. For generals could not be a ground of particular application, without which I could not have peace. Nor had I peace in the bare hopes that Christ would save me, because faith and hope appear to me to be different. 4*thly*, And the ground of all this was, though the Gospel revealed to me my duty formally and clearly, yet not the object of faith, the covenant of grace giving Christ Himself; of whom though I had some knowledge as of one able to save me,

and who only was my upmaking, yet at this time I knew Him not so distinctly in His offices and offers, nor in the grounds He gave of believing, till afterwards; nor was I so acquaint with the nature of absolute promises, and their reach, till afterwards. 5*thly*, I looked too much for something from Christ's life and resurrection, and did not so expressly and distinctly (though I did really) close for Himself. 6*thly*, I closed for spiritual benefits, but not for temporal benefits. 7*thly*, I limited the Holy One of Israel; for I made but use of faith for a time, until it should convey sense of life and consolation. And this I expected immediately, or shortly after I had believed; and that, when that sense came, there would never be a change again, and no use made of faith, but fair days from henceforth. I did not lay my account to wait all the days of my appointed time; and, therefore, not laying my account with trouble and long desertions, the storm that thereafter blew overthrew me.

11. The end of which dispensation, I think, was to acquaint me more distinctly and clearly with the method of effectual calling, which formerly I had not so clearly known. 2*dly*, To learn me to live the life of faith, and to wean me from sense. 3*dly*, To acquaint me with His love, and to manifest and give proof thereof to me. Which appeared clearly in this work; for when I was not dreaming of faith, when all that ever I heard could not clear me what it was, nor suspected such a duty, and when multiplied objections were in my way, Oh how clearly did He loose them! How strongly, how lovingly, how incessantly, how patiently, how condescendingly to my weakness, how earnestly and strongly did he draw! And, lest I should doubt that He was well pleased with what I had done, He sealed it with the budding forth of sanctification, with joy and assurance. But in nothing am I more assured that this was true faith, than by the Lord's constant preserving it, notwithstanding of all tentations: "When I was young He loved me, and led me by the arms, teaching me to go," Hos. xi. 1, 3, and in this He appeared the main doer. 4*thly*, His end was to bring

me to rest, which is by faith: not to a rest from labour or work, nor a rest from tentations, afflictions, and sorrows, and wanderings now and then, but to a rest of security and settlement from fears. For, till the soul close with Christ, it never hath any ground of security or peace; then hath a man strength to perform duties, a balm against the sting of sin in the conscience, an undoubted evident and security for heaven, an undoubted strength to flee to in all extremities; it is now not like a wave in the sea, tossed to and fro, but it is fixed and centred.

12. From this I observe, 1*st*, That ere ever a soul can believe, he must be called of God; for else no man would, could, or should come, Rom. viii. 30; 1 Cor. i. 2; Jer. iii. 22. 2*dly*, That the immediate end of effectual calling is to receive Christ by faith, or to believe in, and rest on Him for all things, John vi. 28, 29; Mat. xxii. 3; Isa. lv. 1. For though the saints be said to be called to heaven, to peace, to be holy; yet is not this the immediate end of effectual calling, but, as I said, to receive Jesus Christ, and all things, freely offered in the Gospel. 3*dly*, As it is God that calls, so it is God that maketh to answer this call; and the creature is but merely passive, 1 Pet. ii. 9. 4*thly*, This call is inward as well as outward, borne in upon our spirit; God takes a dealing with the heart, Hos. ii. 14. For the outward call will never do it: "I will call her to the wilderness, and speak to her heart," Jer. xxxi. 33; 2 Cor. iii. 3. 5*thly*, This call is a glorious call, and stamped with majesty and authority. As it is the Lord that calls, so doth He stamp His own name on it, so that the soul knows it is God that is dealing with him. And so, "where the word of a king is, there is power;" and "who may say unto him, What doest thou?" 6*thly*, This call is in the Word, or by it, Rom. x. 16, 17, not by dumb enthusiasms, superstitions, or a mere providence. It was by the Word I was convinced it was duty to believe, the Word gave me motives, and loosed my objections—all my warrants were from the Word. 7*thly*, Faith is neither to love Christ, or to be content to take

Him; for that is wrought already (to love a person, and to be content to marry him, is not marriage; it is but a disposition to marriage): nor yet to believe that He is able to save, or to hope; but it is to believe on Christ that He is yours, and will bestow Himself and all things on you; and, when thus you believe, you have it: or, it is a cordial assent, and particular application of the promises, giving Christ and all His benefits. Give but a particular and cordial assent to the Gospel, and that is believing; and he never heard the Gospel to whom it spoke not this. I have largely proven this elsewhere, I now give my experience, 1 Tim. i. 15. 8*thly*, The grounds of faith are the command of God, the offer of the Gospel, but especially the Gospel declaration and promise, which at that time was not revealed to me, Mat. xi. 28; 2 Cor. v. 19, 20, 21. The New Testament ministers beseech all to be reconciled, and upon this ground, because He hath "made Him sin for us that knew no sin;" this is the rational ground of believing. The command is the moral ground of believing, God giving Christ freely, and making Him sin, and our covenant, and forgiving in His name; and the Gospel declaring this. Hence it is more than a naked offer. 9*thly*, Although it be the duty of all to believe, and though preparatory qualifications give no right to believe or to Christ; yet is Christ never revealed effectually to save a soul, until in some measure that soul be made to find its own emptiness, and want of self-righteousness. It is the blind and lame that are compelled to come, Luke xiv. 21, 23; Mat. xi. 28; John ix. 39; Prov. ix. 4, 5. 10*thly*, True humiliation doth not consist in legal terrors; and one, sufficiently humbled for sin, may yet be under apprehensions and sense of deadness, Isa. lxiii. 17; Psal. lxxx. 18; nor yet in the continuance of terrors, else the damned in hell should be most humbled. Only it is rather in a conviction of the want of all things, raising a dissatisfaction with the present condition, and a despair of self, and a justifying of God in all matters. Yea, the truest preparations for Christ are a sense and conviction of vileness, and guiltiness, deadness, hardness, and blindness, and a weariedness with the world and duties, and the ill heart. 11*thly*, The heart truly humbled must be touched with original corruption and heart-plagues, and a state of distance and enmity, John xvi. 9. 12*thly*, Though all be humbled, all are not alike humbled; so, though all believers be drawn to Christ, and united to Him, yet are not all drawn in the same manner to Christ. To some heaven, as it were, is opened, the Lord revealing the glory of Jesus to them, so as they, without a hinck, leave all, and come flying to Him, Mat. xiii. 44, so as the soul is so overpowered, that it cannot but cling to the Lord Jesus. There are others that are under deep horrors, and brought down to hell, and distracted with terrors; and Christ is lovely as one that saves from wrath and hell. Necessity makes them flee to the city of refuge, Acts ii. 37; Heb. vi. 18; Psal. cxliii. 9. Some, under the sense of a dead, blind, empty heart, flee to Him for life and eye-salve more expressly, Prov. ix. 4; Jer. xxxi. 18, 19; Hosea xiv. 1; Rev. iii. 18. Some find they cannot come; they desire the Lord to do it, Lam. v. 21; Jer. xxxi. 18. Some, by the sense of a command, do desperately venture, and their faith is an act of wilfulness, Job xiii. 15. Some come to Christ, and they hang (having His promise, "That whosoever comes He will in nowise cast off") by expectations, hope, and desire, until a greater window be opened in heaven; and then they clearly receive Christ, when the Lord Jesus is given, so as the everlasting doors are opened, Psal. xxiv. 7, 9. Not that these doors were not opened before, but because the frame of heart was not so discovered; for a desire after Christ, and a believing what the Gospel saith, and a hope upon this, is a real, though not a sensible, receiving of Christ; only time doth ordinarily manifest the reality of this. Some close with Christ by way of a marriage-consent and contract, Christ overcoming the heart by love, Hosea ii. 19, 20; Eph. v. 25; Jer. xxxi. 33; and l. 5. Some come to Christ by way of looking to Him; in some their faith is but a hope or doth resemble it. 13*thly*, Love is the key that opens the heart, Rom. x. 10, "With the heart man believes to salvation," Hosea ii. 19, 20, which love will kyth in a mourning for want of Him, and a desire after Him and a rejoicing in any thing that appears like Him, and a love unto His people. And, as there is affection in His people to Him, so is there love kythed in the Lord's courting of His people. The command itself, "Turn," hath love engraven on it, the Lord's so earnest seeking of it, His large offers to gain this. 14*thly*, The soul, in believing, closes with the person of Christ (He is the principle object, though not the immediate object of faith), and closes with Him only, and for ever; the soul desires this, and mourns that it is not so: "Take away all sins," Hosea xiv. 3; Jer. l. 5; Psal. xc. 1. For, to come to Christ for His benefits only is not a personal love; to come to Chirst, but not to Him only, is an adulterous marriage; to come to Him for some time, and not for ever, is but to give Christ a visit, not to marry Him. 15*thly*, The whole life of a man is a continued conversion to God, in which he is perpetually humbled under sense of sin, and draws nearer and nearer to God, with more fervent faith and love, and daily walks closer and closer with the Lord, endeavouring at perfection, Mat. xviii. 3; Luke xxii. 32; Prov. xxiii. 26; Cant. iv. 8; Psal. lxiv. 7. And God doth as it were act over and over again His work in the heart, forming His people more exactly than before. And, therefore, no wonder they meet with something like a second, yea, and a third and fourth conversion; especially where there are backslidings. 16*thly*, True faith is lively and fruitful; for it strengthens, settles, and sanctifies the heart, 1 John iii. 3: Acts xv. 9. 17*thly*, There may be faith in the heart, though it doth not manifest itself in express acts of believing to those that have it; yea, there may be great ignorance of the nature of faith in speculation; as the child lives, though he knows not that it is so, nor can tell the conceipt of life, John xiv. 7, 8, compared with v. 16, 17; Acts xix. 2. 18*thly*, Wherever God begins to do good, either to reveal or quicken, He will not leave off, but will manifest Himself more and more, John xiii. 7; Mat. xiii. 31. He will perfect His work unto the end. 19*thly*, There may be a real closing with Christ, and yet felt deadness and hardness. A sick faith is a living faith, John v. 40, and xi. 25. Nor is the soul in this case to stand at a distance with Christ. 20*thly*, The "kingdom of heaven," either outward or inward, "cometh not with observation," John iv. 14; and the foundations of the temple may be matter of mourning, and little glory seen therein; "The day of small things;" a great stream may proceed from a small fountain. The Lord comes not in the thunder nor earthquake, but in the "still voice." We think, like Naaman, that when God comes to the heart, He will appear in visible glory, as some times He doth; yet at other times His voice is not heard in the streets, and He "groweth as a tender plant out of the dry ground," and there is little beauty seen in Him. What a poor beginning was all this of a life of faith!

CHAP. VI.

OF MY PROGRESS AND GROWTH, AND ESTABLISHMENT IN THE WAYS OF GOD.

SECTION I.

How, after closing with Christ by Faith, I was assaulted with terrible Tentations, and how delivered.

I CONTINUED in some peace for ten days' time, still expecting some extraordinary thing, but had not the impressions of joy I had in the beginning so deep upon my spirit as at first; there came a cloud and overshadowed me thus:

1. The Lord left me as to that measure of His comforting and quickening presence: for herein the world is not rest, but a place of labour, change, sorrow, and pain; and, therefore, I behoved to draw in the yoke. *2dly*, I liked ease and rest; and now, when the Lord had broken my bonds and yoke, I thought there was no more for me to do, I dreamed of no cloud or night; and, since the main was secured, I did not apprehend such a necessity of labour, but would have been at sleeping in my nest; or else, if I must needs pray and fight, I desired to be taken up in Christ's arms as I was at first, and to be passive, and Christ to do all, Hosea xi. 3; Psal xxx. 6. I said, Like Peter, "It is good to be here;" and I said, "Let us make a tabernacle," until a cloud over shadowed me, which, when it did, I, expecting in vain Christ's return in the same manner, got other work to do. *3dly*, Not finding ease, nor peace, nor

rest, in God, because I would not dig for it, I behoved to have it from the world, and therefore turned slothful, and for some time followed vanities, seeking rest, until (reproved) I went to prayer, but got no good. I took up Shepherd's "Sound Believer," and there I read this question, "How shall I know whether my whole soul hath come to Christ?" He answers, "When Christ alone gives sufficient satisfaction, so as there is no need of idols and lusts." For this, ah! said I, I do not thus; for my heart runs out continually after idols. How couldst thou think (said conscience) that wast so dead, to close with Christ with the whole soul? Have not the effects discovered thy unsoundness and hypocrisy? See to the whorishness and adulteries of thy heart, and by that judge of thy love in marrying Christ. Doth not thy unsteadfastness in His covenant prove that thy heart was not right with God at first, and that thou liedst unto Him when thou soughtst and closedst with Him as the Rock of thy Salvation? I was made, upon this, to conclude that all my lifetime I was violently carried with a delusion, which made the sky very black. This tentation was so violent, as there was no resisting of it, whereby my heart became sorrowful, strengthless, and discouraged. Oh! what shall I, what should I, nay, what can I do now? Can I bestow more pains than I did? Have I learned anything? Then did I know the meaning of that word, "Thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down." To have known before, while I suspected no less, that I was wrong, would not so have shaken me; as, after some assurance of favour, to be cast down to hell; heart and hand was taken away from me; I did not reason the matter, but yielded easily and quickly. Now were my foundations shaken, and a breach made as to my interest in God, and in the grounds which the Lord had made me lay; a whole sea followed. *4thly*, This was not enough; Satan was let out upon me, to trouble me with atheistical thoughts, which had like serpents been hissing, and had appeared, but were quieted, though not killed; a certain token that they would, when occasion offered, break out most violently. Oh! said I, what a delusion have I been in? I was never convinced nor humbled, nay, I think, never convinced that there was a God, or that His Word was true. Now, the Lord leaving me, and Satan being permitted, and being with former exercises naturally melancholy, atheistical tentations were driven most violently upon me, upon which great and sensible horror fell upon my spirit; which did arise, not so much from the thoughts of this, that there was no God, as from the thoughts that myself was an Atheist, and that I had not a lively demonstrative argument for proving effectually and powerfully that there is a God. Oh miserable creature! cried I, that perished not at first when under horror, ere I had known any thing of God, but to live till now, till I had contracted more guilt and punishment! O happy when I thought I had sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost! For then there were hopes that, while I believed the Scriptures, by them I might be persuaded that I had not sinned it; but now no remedy is left. When the foundations are loosed, what means can I use? To whom shall I go when I doubt the being of God? How shall I be convinced? How shall I pray? 5*thly*, Looking to the dispensation I was under, and the remedilessness of my condition, and the sadness of this Providence, my melancholy thoughts, of which Satan made his use, represented God as terrible and fearful to me, as one who had been watching all my lifetime to do me evil, that had been deluding me with frames of spirit, and that was now manifesting that hid displeasure against me, which He bore me this long time, and let me see He would take vengeance of me. I thought, or apprehended, God's wrath and prejudice was more at my person than faults; in a word, God was terrible and fearful to me, so that I was all taken out of other, and disjointed. 6*thly*, This fire did make the great scum and filth of rebellion appear, and that hatred that was in my heart against God appear. My natural corruptions were stirred more violently than ever, in averseness to God; and so, "when the law came, sin revived, and I died." He was fearful to me; the reading of Scripture and prayer had no taste, nay, these means were terrible to me, so as it was much that put me to duty at all. Oh how happy then (said I), when under my first terrors, by what I am at this time! While terrors formerly were upon me, I could pray, delight in prayer and other means, which were exceeding sweet unto me; but now alas! duties are a burden, a wearisomeness, and terror unto me, and occasionally increase my trouble. For, whenever I read Scripture, a thousand atheistical thoughts were injected in my soul; and, therefore, my case is most hopeless. Now the Lord loves me not, and my soul abhors Him; my heart is so wicked, that though with Spira I say it not with my tongue, yet wish I that there were no God; He is strange and terrible unto me, an enemy, and therefore hateful to me. Then did I find that the carnal mind is enmity against God; I was a right representation of the damned in hell—tormented and hopeless, and raging against God and His providences, sometimes I would say, What a strange thing is this! thou thinkest there is no God, and yet art afraid of Him. The truth is, I did not positively believe that there is no God, but was afraid that I did not believe that there was one; and my fear of God did prove a God, and my belief of a Deity. *7thly*, It did not a little heighten my sorrows, that I was within fourteen days to partake of the sacrament. The condition I was in, and the want of the evidences of grace, made me look on communicating as a dreadful business; and the pride of my heart was such, that having been known for a professor, and to have resolved to communicate, it would be thought a weakness not to communicate, and hazard my estimation with them. And for this cause I was the more diligent to get oil, and to get my wedding-garment on; but found not such returns as upon the like occasions I had hitherto found, partly through sloth, and partly through the pride of my heart; so that I was, on the Sabbath-day morning that I was to communicate, in as sad a taking as I was ever before, utterly jumbled, and at a distance with God, and full of horror and atheistical tentations. 8*thly*, It is true, that for some time it pleased God to suspend these storms, and to give a calm, by binding up Satan for a time; and it continued thus until three days before my communicating. I wondered how they could be removed when the cause was not taken away; and, therefore, they came again, so as, when I came to the table, they assaulted me. Then would I say to myself, Oh poor, wretched soul! thou hast oftentimes desired a conviction and a law work, and now thou hast one to purpose, and claw it off again if thou canst; see what good it doth thee. O how unkindly and diabolical are the convictions that are now-a-days! The occasion and ground of my trouble were atheistical tentations, and hard, cruel thoughts of God, which Satan did violently beat in upon me; as likewise it did afflict me, that I could not get rid of all sin, and that I could not get resolved to do all duties, especially the duty of reproof, to which I was averse through my natural bashfulness. 9*thly*, My trouble was increased by my communicating, especially by conversing with others, I found that the Lord that day had been distributing largely; and it was ordinary with them to express themselves thus, "I have found Him." Oh, said I, and am I only a bastard? Hath He given to every one their allowance and portion, and famished, and never so much as looked on me? This struck me dead, and I was no longer for company. The more spiritual sermons were, and societies were, the more was I troubled. I saw, as it were, them coming from east and west, and sitting with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and myself among those that were thrust out. Meat, company, and all ordinances, were a burden to me; I sat alone, and mine eyes were heavy with sorrow. Oh (said I) for some wilderness that I might lament in, and pour out this miserable soul of mine in the Lord's bosom! My hopes were gone, and I said, Farewell, all pleasant days again, and now henceforth I am entering the gloomy valley and shadow of death. No means would do me good. I looked over Mr

Baxter's arguments for the truth of the Scriptures, but they seemed as straw to me, and my distempered spirit brake through them. My atheistical reasonings would shift after this manner: What knowest thou but that the apostles, who were Christ's immediate successors, out of love to Him, and to their imaginations, might have gone to far off places, and there vented their doctrines, which, through process of time, might have been confirmed by proselytes, who, by the apostles' life, might have been drawn in; and their followers, while there was no printing, might have added, and, being for a long time unquarrelled, might through custom have gained a belief? In a word, all I could say or hear seemed but weak, either to persuade me or to give me peace. After the sacrament, and after my homecoming, my terrors increased, and tentations assaulted me so violently, as that I was taken off my knees, and could not pray one word; nay, they were so violent, and my fears so strong, as that I judged they could not be removed but by a miracle. And I would (said I) seek no other evidence of a divine power and being than the removing these fears; and I thought, if the Lord would condescend to this, I should doubt no more. Then was it suggested to me thus: Thy heart was once so secure, so careless, that it needed an almighty power to awaken thee as now thou art; and cannot the Lord, who hath wounded thy oftentimes deemed impenetrable heart, heal it again?

2. This was my condition; and the Lord was delivering, and did deliver me by these steps and means, which did kyth the working of grace in my soul, and His kindness. 1*st*, I was put continually to seek the Lord in the use of means, notwithstanding of all my discouragements. I prayed, read, and meditated; and some healing I would find in these, but a cloud still came and overshadowed it; however, they did good insensibly. 2*dly*, One time, being at supper, some of my relations and strangers fell a commending a witty, carnal, and persecuting minister, who was an enemy to the ways and people of God. I started up,

and said in a great zeal, that he was not worthy to live, and that the Lord would be about with him. Here was a well if I could see it. Thou sayest thou hatest God, and how canst thou love His people, and hate His enemies, as thou now showest thou dost? "He that loveth Him that begat, loveth them also that are begotten." But reason was weak, for bearing down of downright tentations. 3*dly*, Being in Mr T. H.'s house, a godly and prudent man, his company did me much good, especially his discourses to me concerning the nature of tentations, and how the devil beats in tentations violently in the soul without reason, and dings them in as it were, and threaps by bold assertions on the soul what he would have it believe. As likewise, his prayers did me good, especially when he spake of God's condescendency, and man's stubbornness; and cited Ephraim, whom God smote, "and he went on frowardly in his ways; I have seen him, and will heal him." As likewise, the marvellous light he gave to Scriptures, and manifested a depth in them that I never perceived before, in the wonderful connection of sentences: which did astonish me, and made me see something evidencing a Godhead even in them, a wonderful excellency hid in them. *Lastly*, His cheerful conversation, not in a carnal way, but I thought his joy was inward, proceeding from faith in God. For the universal carnality of professors, with their discouragements, living so short of their principles, did much help forward my Atheism, as it made me think that a saint was but a fancy; but truly I thought mine eyes saw something of a saint and New Testament spirit in him, and was someway persuaded, by seeing his holiness, his cheerfulness in God, and his deep reach in spiritual mysteries, that there was a God, and a holiness attainable. And such was the power of God in him, that with his seasonable discourse and prayer, he would charm, and calm, and quiet my storms, even when I despaired of help, and thought it impossible; though they would return again when I was gone from him. Surely I received much good by him. 4*thly*, But that which gave the dead-stroke to this tentation was this: When I came from that minister's house, my atheistical thoughts recurred and assaulted me in such a manner as my soul was vexed unto death, that I could bide it no longer, and through the violence of tentations was taken off my knees, and unable so much as to knit four sentences together. I at last sat down on my knees, and said to this purpose: Lord, if Thou be, Thou art Almighty, and canst reveal so much of Thyself as may convince me, and put away this storm; I desire thee therefore to give this proof of Thy power and being, as this night to put away this storm, and convince me there is a God, and that Thy Word is true. Lord, be not offended with my peremptoriness, for I can bear no longer; and, besides, "If Thou delay the revelation of Thy mind herein, my suspicious heart will be ready to say, that it was time that altered my condition; and, if this very night Thou do, I will look upon it as a sufficient demonstration of Thy being. Determine Thou the way Thyself; I have opened my mouth. Lord, bow the heavens, and give not, by the continuance of my trouble, such a ground of cavil to the adversary against me, to make me doubt Thou art the hearer of prayer. Immediately it was suggested, Now hold by thy word, said Satan, and thou shalt see God will not help thee this night, and let this increase thy suspicions; for sure, if there were a God, He would help when so put to it. But the Lord did bow the heavens: for, sitting pensively at the fireside, and meditating on some rational arguments for clearing of the verity of the Scriptures, and not finding any but such as might be shifted; at last it was suggested to me, and I was made to fall on these considerations: What a fool hast thou been? Art thou an Atheist because thou canst not prove there is a God? Or, is there no God because thou canst not demonstratively prove it? Suppose it possible then that a number of honest men might lie, and that the world were so mad as to believe them, and that this lie had been carried so secretly on as never to be discovered, and all evidences to the contrary burned when the world universally turned Christians; though this were possible, is it therefore true? Have you ever seen an argument to prove there is no God, or that the Scriptures are false? But grant that the Scriptures are true (it is possible), what evidence could ye have of their truth that ye have not? The doctrine itself is contrary to flesh and blood, against lying and juggling, confirmed by miracles, done before the world and amidst enemies, for a long time printed copies in so many thousand hands in different countries and kingdoms, delivered by the most holy, ingenuous, and faithful men, and not contradicted by enemies. Suppose, I say, all this course had been taken as the greatest evidence of its truth, would there not still be place for such objections as now thou heapest? What more evidence would you have than this? Doth it follow, because such shifts may be given, that therefore the doctrine is not true? Might not all thy answers thou givest be given against it, though undoubtedly true? There appeared such an evidence in this reasoning, the Lord shining upon it, that by the almighty power of Christ my clouds did fly away; the bands in which I had been secretly holden ever since I was born, but not openly and violently kept, did in an instant break asunder, and all my fears evanished, and there was a calm: in which God did show much goodness, and power, and condescendency, who looked so seasonably upon me; for, if this night had passed over, the greatest evidence imaginable, I could have gotten matter of objection against it. Some dregs of this trouble remained, but I was delivered out of it; and after this continued half-a-year like one in a dead-throw, had little sense, wrestling with several tentations and difficulties. About this time there broke out a great sluice of profanity and persecution; the men of power cried down godliness, covenant, and work of reformation; godly ministers were deposed, and wicked, scandalous ministers set up in their places; and none counted loyal but such as could swear and health; and godliness was a crime sufficient. Lord, what a world was this! Nothing but drinking, swearing, mocking of godliness, and the freedom of the country lost; for some three months after this my condition was as the dawning of the day.

3. The ends of which dispensation were, 1*st*, To give proof to me of the Lord's condescendency and love; which I very eminently saw in this. 2*dly*, To convince me by a strong hand of my atheism, and, by healing me in such a forlorn condition, showing an infinite power. For atheistical thoughts came divers times before this to my door, but these unclean spirits went out, and were not cast out, and therefore came again; until that now, as it were in a pitched battle, they were overthrown and cast out with a strong hand, and never after was I troubled with them. 3*dly*, To awaken me out of security, and to keep from it in time to come, that I might not rest in enjoyments, but, "forgetting what is behind, may press forwards;" to keep me waking, exercised and busy. I slept, and therefore this cry came. 4*thly*, To discover my wickedness, misery, and weakness, when left of God and given up to myself: "Woe also unto them when I leave them!" 5*thly*, To put me out of conceit with legal terrors; for I thought they were good, and only esteemed them happy that were under them. They came, but I found they did me ill; and, unless the Lord had guided me thus, I think I would have died doating after them. 6*thly*, To mortify me to extraordinary enlargements; for I found they never come but a clap comes after them. That which so afflicted me, in this condition, was my ignorance, and want of sufficient knowledge of the object of believing, and too much haste in yielding to what Satan said, and some evil principles I had; for I thought it was sinful in me to seek to strengthen my soul, or to comfort it. I did not remember former experiences.

4. From which I learn, 1*st*, Weak faith, or faith in the beginning, is never able to endure assaults of tentations; and, therefore, God Himself must help immediately, Mat. viii. 25, 26. 2*dly*, There may be much of God in a dispensation, and much to be learned, and yet not noticed at first till a long time thereafter; for it is not long since I saw the

well of waters that was here, John xiii. 7; Duet. viii. 3, "In the latter end you shall consider it." 3*dly*, As the devil seeks to undermine folk in their strongest bulwarks, so must the Lord with a strong hand convince of, and teach fundamental principles, and amongst the rest persuade that there is a God, Mat. xvi. 17; 1 Cor. xii. 3. Natural belief and evidence must vanish in supernaturals. 4*thly*, No natural or rational evidence is sufficient to convince of atheism; for all that either I could meditate or read in books, could not do my turn, nor cure my atheism, Mat. xvi. 17, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed this." Peace is a created thing of God, Isa. lvii. 19. 5*thly*, Fears arising, in saints, from tentations of atheism, do proceed from this ground, because they suspect they are atheists; rather than from this, that they indeed believe there is no God. For I feared I should be damned for my atheism. 6*thly*, Christ outshoots Satan in his own bow. The devil sought by these tentations to shake me loose of all my principles, and make me despair; and God blessed it to be the mean of my establishing, Gen. l. 20; Psal. cxix. 71. The Lord pitied me when He saw the devil's violence; and, whatever the beginnings of trouble be, yet the end is peace and good. 7*thly*, There is no case imaginable desperate, in which a man is to give over his hope. For here was as hopeless a case as ever any was in, there being no means to help, no grace in me, but stubbornness, and wrestling with God, none able to help me, all given over, the foundation shaken; and yet out of this was I helped. 8*thly*, Ere the devil be dung out of any principal fort, there is ordinarily a great storm raised; he is not dung out without noise. And principal substantial truths are not cheap bought. 9*thly*, An evil under which the soul mourns, is burdened, and which it loathes, will never destroy a man; it is ills entertained that destroy the soul. 10*thly*, God ever helps, and never until extremity, Duet. xxxii. 36; Isa. xli. 17, when the spirit begins to fail. 11*thly*, While we are here we must resolve to meet with one evil after another to grapple with. Here is not the land of rest or peace: "In the world ye shall have tribulation," either inward or outward, or both, Jo. xvi. ult. I had no sooner come out of the wilderness, and was thinking to "multiply my days as the sand," in peace, but this storm came. "This is not your rest; there remaineth a rest for the people of God." 12*thly*, As there are troubles, so are there deliverances out of troubles; "Many are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." No trouble is a saint's dead-ill, it is not unto death, Psal. xxxiv. 19; but "evil shall slay the wicked," verse 21. 13*thly*, God afflicts in measure, He puts no more weight upon the soul than it is able to bear. I had little or no outward afflictions to grapple with; now, the Lord "stayed His east wind in the day of His rough wind," Isa. xxvii. 8; the foundations of the great deep, which afterwards broke out, were not yet opened. 14*thly*, Violent tentations last not long; when the devil turns violent, his best arrows are done: *Nil vehemens durabile*. 15*thly*, A saint's first exercises are ordinarily in spirituals, ere he be set to conflict with outward troubles, that he be not turned carnal by them, but being somewhat acquainted with the Lord's ways, may be more spiritual in his outward exercises. The Lord trains him up privately, as it were, ere he set him out to fight. 16*thly*, As it is ordinary with young beginners to refuse to be comforted, and to join with Satan; so do they ordinarily fail herein, and refuse to be comforted, thinking it sinful. I might [have] had many things to comfort me, had I heeded; and it is the worst they can do. 17*thly*, Although God saves ordinarily by means, yet it is not any virtue that is in the means, that helps, but it is the Lord concurring with this or that mean. Although I grant an aptitude or rationality in the means, yet by reason of the resistance in the subject, they are ineffectual. It was a rational consideration saved me, but I had rejected many greater evidences; and I found, besides the rationality of the object, some other thing concurring, working physically, Mat. iv. 4; Hos. i. 7; Duet. viii. 3. "That thou mightst know man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." So that, 18*thly*, I found not only a moral suasion on the understanding and will, but even, besides, some physical sensible touch of God's hand on the will, determining me and bowing me to assent, taking away the resistance. 19*thly*, Pride and stubborness is the sting and life of evils; and by submission the gall and venom and fire of them is taken away. This fastens our bonds on us, Jam. iv. 6, "God resists the proud." For, I said, I would be content of terrors, but not to proceed from this ground of atheism, but from God, to show me the evil of a natural condition. When the Lord would remove His hand, I would be discontent; now, said I, the Lord is gone, and hath not done His work, and I am as graceless as ever. 20*thly*, Seldom do mercies good when there is over much peremptoriness in asking them. More submission would have made my deliverance much sweeter, and thankfulness and contentment with little mercies would bring in much gain, Psal. lxxviii. 29. Another storm behoved to humble me, and came a good while after, and did that which this did not; only the Lord condescended to my importunity. 21*stly*, Extraordinary enjoyments are not to be anxiously desired, for they have "the day of adversity" set against them, Eccl. vii. 14. "God hath set the one against the other." 22*dly*, Grace will some way appear in a man's lowest condition, though it be very weak. For I found something of submission from that word, Micah vii. 9. Love likewise appeared, and my heart said, "Though He kill me, yet will I trust in Him." 23*dly*, God will deliver His people sometimes, though they be not very fitted for a deliverance; and, though there be no preparation for Him, He will come. For I may say, except prayer, which my extremity put me to, there was no grace exercised; sin was not made bitter to me, there was no humiliation, no patience, no faith, no instruction learned, but roaring like a bull in the net, and crying like the raven; and yet the Lord heard that voice, and delivered me, though in His justice the deliverance was not so sweet, as I observed before. 24*thly*, My doubts of the being of a God did arise more through want of a demonstrative argument to prove it positively, than from any argument to prove directly there was no God; for the devil never offered to prove that there was no God, but put it on me to prove, and answered my arguments and objections, which was hard to do; and because I could not prove it effectually, I would conclude that therefore there was no God.

SECTION II.

Of a spiritual decay, and some afflictions I was trysted with for the space of two years.

My pride, and hastiness to be delivered out of my last sad exercise, was one reason, I think, that I received no more profit than I did by it. Our desires are not always best for us; the desires of the heart, and soul-leanness, go together, Psal. cvi. 15. I was but a novice in believing, and so not kept in perfect peace.

1. I was then to go South, being in the year 1661, where I stayed from November, I think, till October thereafter, being to pay some money to a creditor, and to transact with some debitors, being at this time twenty-one years of age; as likewise some business did intervene there, which took me up. It was now that I began some way to mind business; I should have gone to the college, but I was otherwise taken up. In a word, except it was to spend my time, I knew no good I did all that time; only I wrote some law. I came home at last, and was a little more taken up in duty when at home than when afield, but made no sensible progress, but was as it were in the dead-throw.

2. About this time my outward afflictions began to appear, and the Lord was bringing me low as to my condition in the world, by means of a person who pretended right to all we had in the world, and had some colour of law for it,

our securites not being well buckled; and besides, he was an active man. He called me South, being cited for that effect; where being come, and destitute of friends and money, the times being evil, and there being much corruption in Courts, and my adversary being in great favour, and I unwilling to go to, and unskilful in law, and withal being conscious to the weakness of my own securities, I was forced and inclined to agree with him on what terms it pleased himself, giving him much of 12,000 merks, which was a considerable part of my interest; which to the ignorant and unacquainted with my affairs (as all were beside myself) did expose me to much disrespect and contempt, which I was forced with patience to bear, and did make me to sail with a low sail. About the same time likewise, I unadvisedly bound for the sum of 8000 merks of provisions to my sisters, they being to be married, and my mother liferenting all my estate, which was not now above £100 sterling per annum; which sums do daily run on interest, and consume my stock. And much of this I looked on as a punishment of my faults.

3. I lived and continued in these sins, which about this time did mightily prevail against me: (1) I omitted the excellent and precious occasions of getting and doing good, both in reference to myself and others, in spirituals and temporals, where I had occasions of sermons, of fellowship of saints, of books, of expeding business, and otherwise accomplishing myself, Mat. xxii. 3; Heb. x. 25; Isa. lxv. 2; Hos. viii. 22. Time was miserably mispent. (2) There was much omission of private duties, of prayer, meditation, and reading of the Scriptures; and these were either omitted, or very slightly performed. (3) I lived in spiritual adulteries, and gave myself to idols, to sensuality of meats, drinks, company, pastime, cards and dice; and, having "forsaken God, the fountain of living waters, I hewed out to myself broken cisterns that can hold no water." And in this life of pleasures I continued, notwithstanding of many challenges of conscience. (4) I through this decayed in grace, lost my

assurance, peace, and strength, and became very unhearty and indisposed. (5) Playing excessively at the unlawful game of cards, spending much of the day and night therein, and in reading of romances, notwithstanding of challenges. (6) There was extraordinary lightness in my conversation, especially with professors, when the sad times called for mourning. The work of reformation was at this time ruined; the eminent servants of Christ, some killed, some banished, their livelihood taken from them, and all generally discountenanced; wickedness advanced, and godliness borne down; faithful ministers cast from their charges, and hirelings introduced, because they would not submit to the accursed prelacy; and yet was I making mirth when mine eyes were witnesses to all this. My outward tentations to this were abundant divertisments, carnal company, and a spirit of sloth.

4. Yet notwithstanding some life continued still, and the burning bush was not consumed. The means that did me good were: (1) I would pray once a day, at least in the morning; and this kept me from putrifying altogether. (2) Writing some practical divinity did me good, and put me likewise in a frame. (3) On the Sabbath-day I would take some more time, and the Lord would ordinarily meet me with some life and affections; and then I would see the evil of my ways, and return. (4) Extraordinary times for meditation I would take; and, when sin and distance would come to some height, I would retire and pour out my soul to God, and by this means get good, and I would put on new resolutions. (5) Afflictions now began likewise to work, and these kept my eyes waking, and would make an impression upon my spirit, and put me out to prayer, and would make mercies, whether spiritual or temporal, sweet to me. (6) Some seasonable words I would hear sometimes in good books, or sermons, or discourses, which did keep my bones green as it were, and would keep in my dying life; and through this it came to pass, that though I was much endangered by tentations, yet not altogether destroyed.

5. God's end in this, for any thing I yet understand, was to let me see the evil of the good of the world. For now, having health, peace, liberty, company, divertisements, and money, I became carnal, that so I might see the evils of the world to be better than the good thereof. *2dly*, That the remembrance of this mispent time might humble me afterwards, that in the sense of this I might walk softly and in bitterness, Hos. ix. 1; Isa. xxxviii. 15. *3dly*, That thereby I might be the better assured of the Lord's everlasting love, who now, when afresh provoked, did not forsake me, but after all this returns. As, 1*mo*, What a mercy that I was not taken away in my sins! If God should then have summoned me, how unprepared had I been, and what a terror would death then have been unto me? Ezek. xx. 8. 2*do*, In keeping in the dying and consuming life, that I fell not back altogether, and slept not the "sleep of death," Exod. iii. 2. 3*tio*, In His pains and visitations, whereby my spirit was upholden. Oh, how did He warn me! how did He preserve my soul from falling, and dried mine eyes from tears: One time, despairing almost of doing any good, I was recovered and strengthened by that word, Duet. viii. 15, 16, "I led thee through a great and terrible wilderness, that I might do thee good in the latter end." Another time a graceless minister, of whom I expected nothing, did revive my spirit against the fears of wants in the world, in a sermon on these words, "Fear not, the hairs of your head are all numbered;" and spake most pertinently to the case. 4*to*, At last He delivered me. And will not this God that hath accompanied me so far, carry me to the end?

6. From which I observe, 1*st*, The great wickedness and power of sin that is in every man's heart, that, notwithstanding of all means, will still be breaking out again and again. O how great need of great watchfulness is there, and spiritual dependence on God! *2dly*, God's own people to whom He shows kindness, are not exempted from the greatest of evils, such as sins, tentations, desertions, decays, and afflictions; which should make us walk in fear and trembling, 2 Chron.

xxxii. 26. 3*dly*, All the Lord's ways are mercy and truth to them that fear Him; He brings good out of all evils; where sin abounds, grace superabounds. I trust this shall do me good, and make me "love much, because much is forgiven," Psal. xxv. 10. 4*thly*, Prosperity, ease, and the desires of the soul, send leanness to the soul; the evils of the world are much better than the good thereof, Prov. i. 32. It is still better with me when I have least outward comforts. 5*thly*, Whatever God suffers in others for a time, or whatever their own thoughts may be, yet will not God suffer sin unpunished or uncorrected in professors, Amos iii. 2. Though God be merciful, gracious, and long-suffering, yet "by no means will He clear the guilty." Justice and mercy kiss one another; for about this same time my outward afflictions did begin, and the seeds of my future afflictions were sown. 6*thly*, All means to recover out of a backslidden condition will be in vain, though they keep life until the Lord Jesus' hour come, "In vain shalt thou use many medicines," Jer. ii. 20, 22. 7*thly*, Prayer and meditation, though not always effectual for the end intended, yet are evermore profitable; for though they did not altogether recover me, yet this I find, they did preserve me from utter falling: and so by experience I know the truth of this, "He hath not said to the house of Jacob, Seek His face in vain;" a great encouragement to duty, Heb. xi. 6; Job. xxi. 15. For, ever since I remember, proportionable to my diligence in seeking was my finding: nor made I ever any extraordinary mint to seek God, but I found something extraordinary. 8*thly*, It is a concluded and resolved thing, which will universally hold true of all the people of God, That they shall not only have inward troubles, but likewise outward troubles in and from the world, and find it (they must) "vanity and vexation of spirit;" that their affections may be weaned therefrom, and they made to seek another rest, and their graces may be exercised, John xvi. ult. 9*thly*, The hasty concluding, we have no interest in God, as it comes and is increased by security, so it is the ground of apostacy, and produces much evil. 1*mo*, It offends God by rubbing a lie on Him, and calling the work of His Spirit a natural work or worse. 2*do*, Unthankfulness for so great a work, the soul denying it. 3*tio*, No love to God, as conceiving Him yet a stranger. 4*to*, No satisfaction, pleasure, or delight in the Lord or His ways, because no interest in them. 5*to*, And, there being no rest in God, there is a necessity of seeking it elsewhere in the creature. 6*to*, The hands weakened in seeking of God, since former pains are ineffectual: What can I do, that I have not done already? saith the soul. 7*mo*, Hard thoughts of God as of an enemy and evil-wisher to poor sinners, rather than as one willing to save them, and that is their friend; seeing no means can prevail with Him. But, 10*thly*, and *lastly*, I learn a Christian's assurance or faith, though it do not firstly flow from holiness, yet is ever proportionable to his holy walking. Faith is kept in a pure conscience; sin is like a blot of ink fallen upon our evidences. This I found as a truth, and so will any not given up to the delusion of Antinomianism.

SECTION III.

Of my recovery by faith.

Being thus kept for a while in bonds, and not able to recover, I came home, and the Lord looked upon me thus:

1. Being come home, and exceedingly afflicted with the remembrance of misspent time, and the cloud that was upon me, breaking out in outward troubles, being then in my sister's, I resolved, seeing my case was extraordinary, and, therefore, required an extraordinary remedy, and that fasting and setting some reasonable time apart had been so blest to me, I would try what the Lord would now do to me by it. The causes were my unsettledness and low condition. At that time I gave up myself to God to be directed by

Him; and He led me by an unexpected way, which was by convincing me of my unbelief, and humbling me under it, and drawing me by renewed acts of faith to Himself again. The Lord made the strain of my discourse to run out on faith and unbelief, which last I considered as the greatest of evils. The considerations that then had influence upon me were, 1*st*, Unbelief was the only and great sin of the Israelites in the wilderness, for which the Lord was so angry, that He "consumed their days in vanity," Ps. lxxviii. 32, 33, because they did not trust in Him, nor believed Him for all His wonders. 2*dly*, Unbelief reflects on God, and says as much as, He is a liar, 1 John v. 10. An opinion of God's infidelity and treachery is the foundation of unbelief, as His truth is the ground of faith. 3*dly*, Unbelief is the mother and womb of all the departings and apostacies of the soul from God, Heb. iii. 12. Unbelief is the captain that strikes the first stroke, and leads all the armies of spiritual evil against us; our faith is the first thing that fails in us. 4*thly*, Unbelief is more heinous than the sin of Sodom, Mat. xi. 24—more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for unbelieving Capernaum. 5*thly*, Unbelievers are amongst the first and chief that shall be sent to the bottomless pit, Rev. xxi. 8, "The fearful and unbelievers," etc. 6*thly*, The Holy Ghost, when He comes to convice of sin, convinces of this most, John xvi. 9, "When He comes He will convince of unbelief;" as though there were no sin but this, or in comparison of this. 7*thly*, Unbelief is a sin against love and kindness, and the refusing of the offers of love; and this wounds the Lord most. Anything but unkindness, Acts xiii. 41—therefore, "ye despisers, wonder and perish." 8*thly*, Unbelief is a sin against the person of Christ; "They would have none of Me." 9*thly*, Unbelief is a sin that makes the Lord lose much pains and travail. If a physician would have gone to a far country, and with great pains have brought a precious potion that only could heal his patient's disease; if now the patient, after all this work, should spill it, or break the vessel in which it were, would not this go very far to the physician's heart? So it is here; the Lord Jesus hath come from the bosom of the Father, taught so much, suffered so much, waited so long on thee, suffered so much of thee, humbled thee, taken all the pains imaginable on thee, and all to make thee believe, and which is only able to do thee good; and wilt thou after all this refuse the potion? 10*thly*, Unbelief is a dangerous and strong evil, that walks up and down the soul under the notion of humility, and can be hardly gotten away. With these considerations which God did press home on my soul, through His goodness and power, I was wrought on so powerfully and sweetly to believe the sinfulness of unbelief, and evil thereof; and the Lord commended faith so to me, that I found I was drawn to Christ by an irresistible yet suitable power, and yet so strongly, that I could not misbelieve, and was made to resolve and promise never more to misbelieve. I was passive, and found a divine power in it. (2) From this there proceeded a new heart, resolution, and strength. (3) All sorrows and fears were removed, and I was much comforted, quieted, and strengthened. (4) Strengthened to seek the Lord and His ways. (5) Sin in general mortified, and a particular sin, viz., playing at cards, quite felled, with which I had so long wrestled in vain, and to which I had so great an inclination that I continued in it against checks of conscience: that sin, I say, this day received its death's wound; so as I put on a thorough resolution never to use any of these games and lottery, and this so effectually, that from that day to this day I had never so much as an inclination to it, which before I could hardly forbear; which gave me great peace afterwards.

2. Nor were the immediate effects of this, while at home, less blessed: For (1), I found a greater wisdom, strength, and activity to go about civil business, which I could master now. (2) I had some experience of the Lord's kindness in some afflictions and trials I met with at the same time, in supporting my spirit under them, and delivering my soul out of them wonderfully by His own immediate power; which,

if God had not done, any of them might do much to break me; these did not in the least dismay me. (3) I found afflictions doing me good, and the rod was giving me instruction, and putting me to prayer in an extraordinary manner. My heart likewise was mortified to the world, and God was made sweet to me as my portion. (4) I got some knowledge in the covenant of grace, the grounds of believing, the advantages thereof, and motives to it. With this my spirit was most exercised, and, being called to another country, I expressed much cheerfulness in my life and spiritual strength in the Lord, crying out against discouragements and unbelief, and pressing faith, and showing the grounds thereof; for I found the the professors thereof to be altogether discouraged with unbelief and a spirit of bondage, for application of promises was counted presumption, and I cannot deny but I was some way useful to some of them. And their great unbelief and slavish spirit did make me think that ere long they would fall though they were eminent, and so it fell out. (5) I began again to write diaries, and to walk more closely and circumspectly with God. (6) Being very dead afterwards, I went under great indisposition to prayer at night, and I, through the Lord's providence, was put to meditate on the Lord's way of doing me good, and the communion I had with Him at my first acquaintance. The Lord so blessed these thoughts that they strangely revived and stirred me up to a more vigorous following of God, which continued and increased for much of a quarter of a year, in which time I was fully growing. (7) The Lord did put me now to meditate on more substantial truths than formerly, viz., the evil of sin, God's attributes, death, hell, and heaven, of indispositions, which did me much good. (8) The buds of true sincerity and purity of ends and actions were now appearing; and I then began first to think that possibly I was converted. (9) The Scriptures were exceeding sweet to me, and I began to see and feel more light, and power, and wisdom in them than ever before, especially the Epistle to the Romans, which did much stablish me in believing. Gifts increased, so was the outward conversation reformed. (10) Several practical and speculative discourses which I did write, especially on afflictions, did me good; solitude, prayer, doing good to others, and strictness in walking, did me much good, so did my meditations on sin, on the attributes of God, on afflictions likewise.

3. Although there was enmity set between me and my lusts, yet not being thoroughly mortified, and they getting leave, did make me unstable in my ways; so that, like the sluggard, "I roasted not what I took in hunting," and beginning to succeed in some affairs, and carrying business, and growing in some estimation with others, my heart, not well balanced, was lifted up, and I was projecting great things to myself, and dealing imperiously with some under my power. Likewise some of my carnal relations at the same time being men of account, coming out of the South, and having ado with them, I but too much sought to humour them, and to comply with their fashions and sinful customs of healthing, which did much untune me, and wear away some of the former impressions.

4. From all which I observe and learn these things: 1*st*, That faith is the life of a Christian and the main grace, Isa. lv. 3; Hab. ii. 4; Rom. i. 17; Heb. x. 38; Gal. ii. 20. 2*dly*, That faith is wrought by the power of God, in which the soul is passive, though faith itself be an act of the soul; for I was overpowered in believing and drawn to God. 3*dly*, That faith hath a great influence on sanctification, so that one main reason of so little power against sin, so little holiness in life and conversation, is the want of the exercise of faith, and through a spirit of bondage, 1 Pet. i. 5; Mark ix. 19, 23; Heb. xi. 33. By faith righteousness is wrought, and all apostacy proceeds from a decay of faith. 4*thly*, Where Christ hath begun a good work, He will continue still to perfect it, Phil. i. 6. 5*thly*, Faith and every other grace is at first but very imperfect, Matth. xiii. 31—"like a grain of mustard-seed." 6*thly*, God doth not always deliver in that

way and manner that is thought or designed by the poor soul itself, but in an unexpected and oftentimes contrary way. For I designed a fast to see if the Lord would break in with terror upon my soul, and that was the way by which I thought to return out of my backsliding, and, behold, the Lord helped, by pressing and helping to believe, 2 Kings v. 11; Prov. iii. 5; Isa. lv. 8. 7*thly*, Faith is the first grace in exercise, prior in time to any other, John vi. 29; Jer. xxxi. 19, "After I was turned, I smote upon my thigh." And he that would do anything, let him fix his faith first, for "whatever is not done in faith is sin." 8*thly*, As faith and other graces have their flowings, so have they and will have their ebbings; they have their winters and summers, none must expect constant and uninterrupted growth; they have their witherings, that dependence and fresh application may be made to Christ, and that Christ for a renewed life may put a renewed obligation on the soul, Isa. xxxiii. 24; Psalm cii. 26; 1 Pet. i. 24. Let none expect constant health. It is said of the heavens, "Thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed." 9*thly*, Days and times set apart extraordinarily, on some extraordinary occasions, are exceeding useful and profitable (if not needful) to the preservation of a Christian life; nor know I how folks can be Christians without it. There were occasional sacrifices as well as the daily burnt-offering, and days and times extraordinarily for extraordinary occasions. It is true, they are not stinted now under the Gospel, nor holy by precept, as they were; but there is this moral in them that yet obliges, that extraordinary mercies or troubles should have proportional extraordinary worship and address to God. For my own part, I cannot express how needful, yea, how profitable and necessary these days have been—what others may do I know not. And I look on the neglect of extraordinary address to God as one main cause why there are so many decayed, and are but high-way Christians.

SECTION IV.

Of some after troubles and decays that befell me, and recoveries thereout, 1663.

1. Being delivered now from all my fears, and my day clearing as to my spiritual condition and better hopes of temporal affairs, I was anew plunged in a sea of troubles when I did scarce dream of it. For falling out with some of my relations unadvisedly, and egged on by others, anent some civil matters, I pursued them at law, and spent more on it than the matter was worth, and that merely on the account of my credit and reputation. Where there wanted not diligence and success as to my part, but God put visible hinderances in the way, and I was led merely by my inclinations, and did not advise with the Lord. *2dly*, At first, through want of occasions to pray, and manifold tentations, and want of good company, and much distracted with what I intended, and quartering in a change-house, I fell in some considerable decay, and began to be remiss in my progress, and to grow dead, and dull, and untender, and the Lord's communications did dry up upon my soul, and now I began to forget former things; and this continued July and August. *3dly*, I changed my quarters in town, being unsatisfied with my former, and the inconvenience thereof, and took up my chamber in a godly man's house, an outed minister, where, through his godly conversation, and some more pains taken in duties, and his godly spiritual sermons on the Sabbath-day, and my withdrawing from hearing curates, but especially through the Lord's pouring out of His Spirit, and drawing near to my soul, I began again to recover, and in process of time not only recovered what I lost but much more. The unregarded vineyard was now looked to again, and communion with God set on foot, and my taste of spiritual truths returned again. Here I stayed till the middle of October. *4thly*, One Sabbath-day especially, when alone, and at first perceiving nothing, and under great

deadness, and upon the point of giving over, the Lord was pleased unexpectedly to draw near, and to concur so with my exercises, as that through the light of His Spirit I was made to see much of my good estate, and to behold the work of God in my soul, to discover the many mistakes I had that before kept me in darkness and bondage, through which I was so enlightened and strengthened that it was a recovery of health after sickness, and like the sun getting out from under the cloud; in the strength of which I went afterwards, and by this day's exercise did much advance in my journey. And the truths of the Lord then taught me were of special use ever afterwards to me. 5*thly*, I here likewise got some extraordinary visits from the Lord both in prayer and other exercises, especially in reading of the Scriptures. But it was pressed on my spirit, and I was followed with it, "That bonds and afflictions were abiding me," which accordingly fell out. 6*thly*, I succeeded as to my business for which I came South, having got the law with much pains and expenses against those who did compete with me, they not striving much against it, but going another way to work. 7*thly*, Here, likewise, taking but too great a liberty to converse with Quakers, I was, through some of their insinuations and reading of their books, tempted to join with them, and a great stir upon my spirit. But going to pray to God, and recommending my staggering spirit to Him, the Lord made such a light to shine in my soul from His Word, that did let me see the utter evil of their way, and how cross it was to God's will, the danger and inconsistency of it with salvation, so as I was made to look on them as the greatest enemies to Christ of any He had, and the effects of the wrath of God to punish such as had not received the truth in love. This was a week's exercise to me. The means were prayer, submission, seasonably suggested Scriptures, and some meditation on their way; but that which did most alienate me from them was, I saw them more zealous for spreading their opinion than drawing to Christ. I saw or heard little of His praises in their mouths; the end of their conversation was not Christ. *2dly*, I thought on the main controverted principles, and clearly saw them of the devil. I looked on the inward testimony and guiding of the spirit (as they say) in the heart, but as a device of Satan to cast off the Scriptures, that he, deluding their spirits, and they giving way to their own corrupt imaginations, might close with any evil he should suggest; and besides, I saw it flat contrary to the Scriptures by which Christ was led, and which were given that we might believe and learn to fear God. *3dly*, They denied the sovereignty of God in maintaining free-will and all in man's power, which I saw manifestly cross to the Scriptures. *4thly*, I saw clearly that they walked in a covenant of works; for their way of justification and happiness was only taking heed to the light within, and obeying it, and by so doing to come to eternal life; and this I could never digest. *5thly*, I looked on their casting aside a standing ministry and ordinances, and not praying but when the Spirit moveth, as so many hellish inventions of Satan, and great presumptuous arrogancy, and the effects of a slothful spirit, and the design of all to draw from the simplicity of the Gospel. *6thly*, I saw they walked by sense and feeling, and not by faith. *7thly*, I saw and considered that those that they made their prey were ordinarily but only old jaded professors, that never found the constant satisfying sweetness of their own religion, and in time wearying of it, and not able to resist the strong temptations of spiritual enemies, and in a word wanting rest in Christ, because never truly united to Him, have in time withered, and, like the unclean spirit, seeking rest and finding none, have here at last stumbled. Nor have I ever been stumbled at any who fell that way, being known to have sense predominant in them that in time would lead them to it. In a word, I never knew any extraordinary tender walker, and knowing, continuing so, that stumbled in this; and this delusion seemed to me to be a particular judgment on adulterous professors, whereas the Gospel takes and apprehends all sorts. *8thly*, I considered, that if there was any thing commendable in them, such as their unwillingness to pray rashly, but in the Spirit, their waiting and close attending on the Spirit, their mortification to the world, their self-denial, their sobriety and temperance in all things, their freedom in reproving all sorts, and their diligence in exhorting all—I say, if there was any thing like this commendable in them, our own principles did lead us to these things, however we generally in our practice come short; and I looked on this foolish people as stirred up of God to upbraid His own people, and to teach them these things which they so much press. These things, with their personal infirmities and weakness which I observed, with other reasons which I now remember not, through the Lord's blessing had such influence as made me utterly abhor them, the Lord in all this instructing me with a strong hand.

2. During this time likewise I began to forsake the prelates and curates, and did forbear to hear them. The steps by which I went were: (1) For a long time I heard without any scruple, but never could I get any good, and I found the outward ordinances do me less good than formerly; yea, when privately, I got good; nor could I after examination find any cause in me of this. (2) The curate's preaching did me ill at last, insomuch, that when I would come to sermon in any frame, I would come from it dead and heartless; and, when I went indisposed, I would be far worse. Thus I continued for a long time; and many times I observed this, but could not imagine the cause: yet at length I was suspicious that this might be the cause, especially when withdrawing became a doubtsome case in the kingdom, which began to be about the time that there was an act made against it. (3) Suspecting the matter, I began to examine it; and at first view my affections began to be engaged for the negative, ere yet my judgment was determined; and, by looking to it, I found the weakness of the chief grounds for hearing, by considering that the naked act of preaching was not an ordinance

of God (otherwise women, madmen, children, yea, and devils, could preach) unless by men sent. I saw likewise that the Church could not make choice of them whom God had in His Word discharged. I saw likewise that we might separate from those that were never excommunicate. I was convinced likewise that the true visible Church did not stand so much in the multitude as in the serious professors of the truths of God; and that these few, continuing faithful, were rather to be followed than the multitude. Having laid these principles, a door was opened. (4) I went a good while contrary to my inclinations; and one day going, I was compelled to return back again, and durst not for terror go forwards. Upon which I prayed to God, that if He were displeased with my going, He would gave me some sign thereof, and that He might be pleased to bless my private exercises; which the Lord did, so as, in one afternoon while private, I gained more life and knowledge of God than I did a whole year before; by which I was much confirmed. (5) About the same time many providential considerations had influence with me; the universality of the godly and tenderest leaving them daily; the extraordinary influence of God's Spirit on myself and others when separate from them; some sad consequences following such as did hear them; as likewise, I heard and knew of some under exercise for hearing of them, which much confirmed me, and made me think that God did own us in not hearing. I found that made out to me, "Be ye separate, and I will be a father to you." (6) By searching into the matter as a case of conscience, I found positive grounds for judging "withdrawing from them" a seasonable duty; as the frequent commands of God, to "separate from," to "let alone," and "beware of," and "flee from" corrupt guides, John x. 5; Mat. xv. 14. I thought the consequence of hearing to be a hardening and strengthening of them in their courses, and a destruction to the work of God: I looked on it as against nature to join and keep fellowship with such rebels, that were so signally and avowedly against the Lord in arms; and I thought love to God compelled me to leave them. I likewise looked on hearing of them (as it was an act of worship), an owning of the authority of prelates; for "He that receiveth you, receiveth Me; and He that receiveth Me, receiveth Him that sent Me." For obedience to officers, when it is active, is an acknowledgment of their authority. I conceived I was otherwise bound by the covenant. And, *lastly*, I judged my respect to the poor people of God, and who were generally injured for this cause, should make me run into them, and take the same lot with them in life or death, especially seeing they suffered upon that account. (7) Being to die, there was nothing that in my conscience got such an approbation from God as my separation from them. And (8) To confirm all, I besought God by fasting on a day of humilation set apart on purpose for this effect, beseeching God to reveal His mind unto me in this case; the result of which was, that there were new grounds given me of separation from them, and my former grounds confirmed; so that I continued in a separation from them to this day. Thus was I drawn from curates, and by these means, being now six years almost since I first left them.

3. And now, being a little strengthened, and looking for good days, a cloud came and darkened my sky; for a grievous storm of outward afflictions did break out, which did indeed win into my soul, and which did increase and draw my former afflictions to a head; the steps of which were these: (1) The great law business for which I came South, and had gotten done, was at once casten in the hows by those whose names I had borrowed to the pursuit, they discharging it; by which means my reputation was lost, and what I should gain by it; as likewise all my preparations against some debitors were made void, and I looked on this at that time no less than the loss of £20,000. (2) I lost through my absence from the North, and want of advertisement South, 800 merks per annum, which were comprised formerly, and now recovered by the creditors, which afterwards I strove to hinder all I could, and to

regain, but all in vain, and to no purpose, but laying out of needless expenses; so as I behoved to live on my mother's bounty, and had not wherewith to spend or do business. (3) And, to help this, other 200 merks per annum were evicted from me about the same time, through want of money to defend it, and bad securites. (4) Nor was this enough. After I came home I could not get rest nor freedom to enjoy myself, but was charged before two courts at one time most violently, for no less than 12,000 merks alleged due by my father, and a wrongous ejection, which kept me continually travelling, and put me to great charges to maintain these two actions, being likewise at the same time charged South. (5) There were likewise some small debts which I was owing here and there, extending in all to £1000, for which I was daily harassed by several persons, so that South, North, East, and West, I could not turn me where I had not a creditor—which I confess troubled me more than all the rest, as having my credit engaged therein; and that which I had ordered to pay them was taken away, nor knew I what to do. One mercy I had, my health was continued. (6) Nothing now remained of all my father's great fortune but a small wadset of sixteen chalders, liferented likewise by my mother. And about the same time a new (though an unjust) adversary charges both her and me for 36,000 merks, and a reduction of our rights; so that our whole livelihood was either gone or at stake. For four years did this adversary vex us, and was like to have undone us as to our temporal condition, had not the Lord prevented. (7) To this was added contempt and reproach; I was the table-talk of the times then; "Behold a man smitten of God." I was a sign and wonder; the people of God were grieved; my nearest and surest friends forsook and looked strange on me, of whose kindness now I had proof, and whom of purpose I tried, though I knew they would not help me; I was as a burden to them, and by them despised. And whoever had any thing to say, did now strike in against me; my enemies rejoiced, and myself at first was sore sunken. (8) And, to complete all, there was no returning to Him that smote me, and my strokes felled me, and at first I decayed in my spiritual condition; and thus was my spiritual condition from October to January 1665; all things were low both spiritually and temporally.

4. The causes of these my troubles were either outward or from myself. The outward causes were, my authors' bad securities in their heritages, which were questioned in my time. (2) My father's cautionary for others, which hath been 48,000 merks out of my way. (3) His dying so soon, and leaving me so young. (4) The unskilfulness and negligence of those whom he intrusted with the management thereof; for nothing was looked to after he was gone, and all was destroyed ere I was twenty years of age. (5) Evil friends, some slighting us and denying us help; others, out of envy to my father, employing all their power to harm us, which succeeded. (6) Evil times, so as I durst scarce appear to do any thing, those whom I had to do with being in court, and I being hated for my principles; and all things went by moyen and bribing, so as I was forced to agree with them in the terms they pleased. *Secondly*, The cause inward from myself was sin; as (1) I suppose my relations' sins had influence on this storm, for I found great freedom in confessing them. (2) We were a professing family, and did not walk suitably thereunto, but like the world. (3) My carnality, and desires to be great with men, and my too much esteeming, prizing, and desiring of outward greatness, and comforts. (4) Faithlessness in dealing with others, seeking by law-tricks to secure our interests, and dissimulation in bargaining. (5) Not acknowledging of God in all our ways, but doing all things without His advice, and running to this or the other outward help. (6) Pride, and stoutness of heart, which God hath been crushing. (7) Breach of vows and engagements, especially of dedicating myself to the service of God in the ministry. (8) Incorrigibleness under ordinances, convictions, and lesser judments; therefore did the Lord take the rod, Exod. xx. 5;

Job v. 4, 5. (2) Amos iii. 2; Ezek. xxxvi. 20. (3) Isa. lvii. 17; Jer. vi. 12, 13. (4) Jer. vi. 13. (5) Hos. viii. 3, 4; Isa. xxxi. 1. (6) James iv. 6; Isa. xxviii. 1. (7) Eccles. v. 4, 5. (8) Amos iv. 6; Isa. vi. 9, 11. *Thirdly*, The Lord's ends were, as I suppose, 1*st*, To reform and heal me, Isa. xxvii. 9. 2*dly*, To humble my heart, and break it; to break the pride, stoutness, hardness, and lightness thereof, Deut. viii. 2. 3*dly*, To deaden me to the world, and to friends and relations; and, therefore, made me find such bitterness, vexation, vanity, and disappointments from it. No friend or relation ever I had but failed and disobliged me, Hos. ii. 6, 7; Micah ii. 10. 4*thly*, To give me experience of His love in delivering me out of all these troubles, and supporting me under them, Rom. v. 3, 4, 5, to do me good in my latter end, Deut. viii. 15, 16, to prepare me for this. 5*thly*, That I might be fitted and enabled to direct and comfort others in their afflictions, 2 Cor. i. 4. 6*thly*, To draw me to Himself, and seek Him more earnestly, Isa. xxvi. 8. 7*thly*, To keep me from rotting and dying, and to hold me waking; therefore hath He been constantly exercising me, Isa. xxxviii. 16. "By these things shall men live." 8*thly*, To learn, exercise, and increase faith and patience, James i. 2, 3. 9*thly*, To keep me with Himself in these times, and to preserve me from the snares of an evil time, which now I find rich men exposed unto. And, indeed, I found much good by all these dispensations; for by the sadness of the countenance I find my heart bettered and mortified to the world, and I draw nearer to God, and kept waking, and have experience of the Lord's goodness, so that I may say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." One thing I am sure of, I would never have kythed so much for Him as I do now. In a word, the Lord hath so blessed His rod to me, as I find all these ends and fruits of righteousness wrought on me, so as I may say, I had perished unless I had perished *(periissem nisi periissem).* The world and the "prosperity of fools hath destroyed" many; "they have no changes, and, therefore, fear not

God;" and "they are settled on their lees." Blessed be the Lord for inward and outward exercises and troubles.

5. I learn and observe these things: (1) Outward prosperity puffs up the heart, Deut. xxxii. 15. (2) As a man thrives in the world, so hath he friends in the world; I found their kindness ebb and flow as my fortune did, Lam. i. 8; Ezek. xvi. 37. (3) When God afflicts, it is in earnest and not in jest, Ezek. ii. 4, 5; 1 Sam. iii. 12; Jer. iv. 12, a full wind, and vi. 19, I felt this storm. (4) There is need of great heaviness; light strokes will not do the turn, and, therefore, the furnace is made the hotter. (5) It is the ordinary lot of God's people, and they must lay their account with it, to find trouble in and from the world, John xvi. ult. "Through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God." (6) All inventions and means are in vain to deliver out of trouble till the acceptable year come. "In vain shalt thou use many medicines." All means were broken. (7) The storms of God's people may last long, so as they may be put to cry, "How long?" and their whole years spent in sighing, Psal. xiii. 1. (8) The want of the company of God's people is a great evil, and a great step to defection; I found the loss of it. Eccl. iv. 10, "Woe to him that is alone." (9) Their company is a great mercy, and a blessed mean to beget life, 1 Pet. iii. 1, to maintain it and recover life, Eccl. iv. 9, 10, 11, 12. Through good company I recovered again. (10) No greater curse than for a man to get his will and desires in the world. I ever got a wound when I had the desires of my heart; then leanness was sent to my soul. (11) Whatever sin the Lord lets go with His people, yet will He not let pride go with them. I was seeking to be great in the world, James iv. 6; 2 Chron. xxxii. 25. (12) Ordinarily men at first get no good by afflictions, but are rather worse, and are felled under them, Hosea ii. 6, 7; Isa. lvii. 17. (13) The crosses of the people of God are still and ever sanctified unto them really, "for it shall accomplish that whereunto it is sent," and, therefore, they are blessed things.

"It is good for me that I have been afflicted," Heb. xii. 11. (14) The good is not presently seen, though it be, but there is much corruption seen; God doth good, though we see it not. "They knew not that I healed them," Hosea xi. 3. "In the latter end ye shall consider it." (15) God shows much mercy in affliction; He lays it not on till they be able to bear it, and He "stays His rough wind in the day of His east wind." The Lord gave some mitigation and a breathing time, and strengthened the soul, and by His visitations upheld it, Psal. cxxxviii. 3, lest they should be swallowed up of grief and sorrow. (16) As the people of God are graciously exercised under trouble, so doth there much ill blood come out too. I dare not say but grace was exercised, but Oh how much corruption was there! how much fainting, murmuring, unbelief, and seeking to carnal means was there! and how slowly did my dross go away! (17) The beginning of a Christian warfare and life is the hardest, and the entry is straitest. "The latter end is peace;" "to do thee good in thy latter end." (18) Sin and afflictions do ordinarily tryst together, and sin is the sting of crosses; "The sting of death is sin." A proud, murmuring, sinful heart makes weights and burdens painful. (19) God's love is more seen in comforting and strengthening under trouble than in delivering from it, Luke xii. 32. (20) God is the only comforter of His people under afflictions. "In Thee the fatherless findeth mercy; in Me ye shall have peace."

SECTION V.

Of my recovery out of decays and afflictions.

1. Being in this forsaken and desolate case, and none to pity, it pleased the Lord to look upon me, and to give my soul a resting-place when forsaken of all others; He was the only friend in adversity. (1) He strengthened my soul by comfortable words, allaying thereby the extremity of my afflictions—then did He say unto me, "Why art thou dis-

quieted?" Is there any thing but what is ordinary befallen thee? Are there not many thousands that would change conditions with thee? All this is but bairn's-play to what others have suffered. Is it not good that thou art thus afflicted? Thou hast much of Christ's compassion, and pity, and tenderness; it may be He will do thee good for this. It is good that this is the vengeance He takes for all that thou hast done—"Chastened of the Lord, that thou mayest not be condemned with the world." Poor soul, what hast thou lost? Thy loss hath been only the things of the world, in which no part of thy happiness doth consist. Art thou not in thy Father's hand? and will not thy Tutor order all things well? Men and devils can do no more than He prescribes, and dost thou fear evil from that airth? And shouldst thou not bear all that comes from Him? But consider further, wouldst thou yet exchange states with the mad world? All thy adversaries, in all likelihood, that are now making merry, are to burn in Hell for ever. Is thy misery any thing to these? Wait, therefore, upon God. A little time will blow over this storm, it is so violent that it cannot last long. And though thy case be very sad, yet is it not beyond the reach of God's power; yea, for all this thou shalt bless the day that ever thou wast afflicted. Afflictions are good things, else had they never been left in legacy by Christ, nor promised in the new covenant. With these and the like considerations was my soul several times in my extremity refreshed and allayed. (2) I would get much ease sometimes by pouring out of my soul to God in prayer, and showing Him my case, which at first I could not win unto. (3) I had general letters of loosing arrestments; some persons were left out; I was counselled, in respect it was just, and did proceed upon an omission and sloth, to insert and interline the other persons, and to execute it particularly. To which I condescended at first, but afterwards I had scruples of it, imagining it to be illegal; and though it was just, yet there should be so much respect to the law as not to contravene it or to lie on it. Being in this strait, and bound for two days' space, I could get none prayed, the Lord thereby showing Himself displeased with such a procedure. I did all I could to clear my conscience, but the more was I bound and straitened; and to satisfy my conscience my will could not condescend. Thus was I racked betwixt conscience and interest, each of them imprisoning me. At last I prayed to the Lord, that with His power He would bow my will to His. The Lord heard, and convinced me of the sinfulness and inconveniency of the thing, and of my duty. Well, then, quoth I, as delivered from a prison, though I should lose 10,000 merks by it, I will not displease the Lord's deputy; let me have war with all, but peace with God, let the hazard and prejudice be what it can; and thereupon immediately and fully resolved to forego my interest, and leave the Lord to recompense me. Which, when I had once win unto, immediately there came a sweet calm into my soul, access to God, my mouth opened in prayer, my bonds loosed, my spirit comforted and strengthened, and an extraordinary sweetness found in complying with the Lord's will, and, at the same time, strengthened to bear all my burdens, and cheerfully to undergo them; got light what to do, so as the next day I execute what I resolved, my friends in the meantime chiding with me, and thinking me a gone man that stood on such a scruple. (4) Quickly did the Lord reward me even outwardly; for my adversary that had charged me for a spulzie, and had it to his probation before the Sheriff-court, insisting violently; and I, ignorant what defences to make, had in my company a registrate horning, which I accidentally and without premeditation (God putting it in my mind at the same time) did cast in, by which he, being the King's rebel, was incapacitate from pursuing me. And the Lord so ordered it that he never after compeared to trouble me, by which means I was delivered from a loss and a fashery, and had but one court to wait upon. (5) Being pursued before the Commissar-court likewise for 9000 merks resting by my father, the Lord in that showed me kindness, notwithstanding of the greatness of the sum, the power, knowledge, influence, and activity of my adversary; and notwithstanding his process was very well fixed, and that I wanted money, and none to lend me from whom I was wont to borrow, and had no skill in law matters then (I was then like the setting sun in my declining days, and looked on as a despised branch, withered, that would never grow again; and that every one thought the decreet should be quickly pronounced against me, yea, and myself every day in daily expectations thereof), yet it pleased God to stir up a stranger to lend me money, to provide unexpected defences in some books of law, wherein my case would at first start up, and therefrom be provided with what to say in law against the next day. The time for a whole half-year, in which ordinarily every week there was a compearance, was protracted; and when at last I was adjudged to swear or otherwise be descerned, and I refusing lest I should offend others, though I was clear in the matter; the very day in which sentence was to be pronounced against me, by threatening the judges with casting in a horning against them, I got them for that day to delay it. Which horning I came very accidentally by, and so not only got it delayed, but my adversary, wearied with such delays, and his commission at the same time taken away, he gave over the pursuit, and never further troubled me till this day; and I got, partly by reading and partly by pleading and hearing the form, a competent measure of knowledge in the law.

2. At the same time I was growing in my spiritual condition, recovering out of my decays, and increasing in faith, in diligence, and in strength; likewise the evidence of regeneration, in the duty of examination was discovered, mistakes cleared, and buds of the new nature did appear above ground; the Scriptures were very sweet, occasions of meeting with God seldom in vain; this I had to counterbalance my outward troubles, so that, as the Lord did bear down with one hand, He supported with the other. One

time in F. I was strongly enlightened in the mystery of the Trinity; another night I was so taken up with the thoughts of the love of Christ, and refreshed, that I awakened the whole winter night admiring Christ, and praying with suitable affection, and at other times would spend two or three hours in prayer. Likewise, at the same time, writing on the Scriptures, I received much light, clearness, and sweetness (we were then living in a burrows town). Several extraordinary visits would the Lord bestow on me, remembering my afflictions, by which I would oftentimes be carried above the world. I wrote at this time a complete treatise of afflictions and of conversion, as likewise finished a treatise concerning the Scriptures almost, and wrote several things on the attributes of God, and some other miscellanies, in which I was extraordinarily assisted, and with which I was very much benefitted; and although there was but one professor in the town, and he clothed with many weaknesses, yet did I find great advantage in his company, in praying together and conferring. I likewise remember this, that the Lord would be very kind to me (whilst others were at sermon on the Lord's day) in private, and when others would revile me, and look down upon me, and taunt me, and vex me; so as, when friends looked aloof, the Lord would draw near; insomuch that I knew not when I profited more than now.

3. When we came home again, the Lord was no less kind to me, yea, exceeded; and I was daily admitted to nearer and nearer fellowship with Himself. And wherever I was, God was with me, and continued thus till October. (1) Writing several meditations did me much good, and speaking unto the family. (2) About this time did I begin to study faith and the covenant of grace. And one time, from Rom. v., and from the consideration of baptism, was I mightily strengthened in assurance and confidence, and "the joy of the Lord" did I find to be "my strength." (3) Another time, setting some time apart one afternoon for examining my condition, though at first I was very indis-

posed, yet the Lord so shined and countenanced me, as that evidences were very clear, and I found undoubted marks of sanctification, with which I was so enlightened and refreshed, that in the strength thereof I walked many days. (4) I discovered a marvellous and great depth in the covenant of grace; I was much enlightened and strengthened in the extent, freedom, and excellency thereof. I saw it a very rational thing to believe, and among other considerations that did much strengthen me, this was one, that God required no other thing than to be content; so that, if I were content, I needed no doubt. And why do I mourn for want of Christ (said I), if I be not content? And I thought and supposed, and put it home to my own soul, if Christ would come down from heaven, and draw up such a covenant, wherein Himself and all things were promised, would I willingly subscribe this covenant? The Lord one night began to apply this very strongly and clearly. Why dost thou not this? It was "a night to be much remembered" for ever. After going to bed, in August, the Lord did so clear the covenant of grace, and by His Spirit made me (at first dull and weak) apply and consent, and feed upon these privileges as mine. Are all these things yours? quoth the Spirit, why dost thou not feed upon them? Why dost thou not "delight thyself in fatness?" Thou complainest of the want of life, strength, and comfort. Why dost thou not come to the fire, that thou mayest be warm? Here's the Lord's security for what thou wantest. If thou hadst thy friend's security for money, thou wouldst be glad; and hast thou not the Lord's in thy Bible? and may not heaven, Christ, and holiness, satisfy thee? And with this there came such a mighty gale of the Spirit that took away all my confusions, that made my soul apply Christ and all His benefits, answered all my objections so fully and clearly, and made me strongly to apply the promises; insomuch that I found Christ a sweet and satisfying thing; I found His flesh meat indeed, and His blood drink indeed; all fears were driven away; the Gospel privileges appeared exceeding sweet, so as I spent the whole night in prayer and praising and rejoicing, wishing now for the morning, that I might do mightily for the Lord. My very body was weakened with the abundance of the joy of faith, arising from a sense of an interest in God. I was likewise very evangelical in my actings, considering all actions as the Lord's service, and myself and all things the Lord's; walking in great peace and glorifying God, endeavouring to encourage others. I now began to think how to lay a bar on the doors, to keep the Lord Jesus that He should not depart again. I thought the covenant of grace would be an everlasting foundation of peace; there was more sweetness found in duties than ordinarily, and more strength to glorify Him, and greater peace and serenity of mind, though my daily wanderings did continue, and I was not altogether fixed, a storm behoved to do that. Likewise at the same time I received much knowledge and comfort from Mr Goodwin's works, especially in his "Growth of Grace," which answered, as face doth to face, to the frame of my spirit. The Lord's dealings with me now I have written largely elsewhere in my daily diary.

4. Six days after this was Satan let loose, and He brangled all my evidences and comforts. The grounds were, because I found not after some time the comfortable and satisfying sense of these things remaining upon my spirit; and, next, because it came not after deep humiliation and horrors; and, lastly, because many of my old sins continued, as likewise there were some apprehensions of wrath immediately darted upon my soul, which at first staggered me, and made me hang down the head as I used to do. But then I thought, it is childish with the first view of things to be cast down, and to be over credulous, and led like a child by my blind apprehensions. What know I but Satan may have a hand in this? I will therefore try this, and look ere I leap, and examine the matter ere I conclude any thing, and so resolved to ding out the bottom of it; and, therefore, I began to say unto my soul, "Why art thou cast down?"

And after inquiry I found the cause of my trouble to be doubting under the apprehensions of unsoundness, and that there was never a real work wrought upon my spirit. I further examined what ground was for this, and what made this continual struggle in my spirit, Gen. xxv. 22, and after search I found it to be, because at first there was not a clear humbling work continuing till the glorious revelation of Jesus to the soul. I proceeded to try what strength or truth was in this, and I found a falsehood in the objection, and grounded upon a mere imagination and allegeance, seeing by search I found out a substantial work of humiliation and preparation, though it did not agree in all circumstances with that work which hath been in others. I discovered this but darkly at first, but more clearly afterwards. I began to think why the Lord contended with me, and did seem to be angry. In prayer it was revealed to me that I might stand in awe, and fear, and not be so bold in sinning against Him, and to count sin a weighty matter, Exod. xx. 20. I lastly began to think what should be my present carriage, and I thought three or four things were very clearly and sweetly recommended to me: (1) Not to give over, or despair. (2) Not to murmur, or fret, or quarrel with God, but by quiet submission to yield unto Him, and keep silence before Him. (3) Not to quit duty, but ever in the use of means to wait on Him. (4) To be watchful against sin, and not to make my breach greater than it was. Through this exercise, and solid conclusion laid, much of the venom of my exercise was taken away, and Satan, finding me thus buckled, did leave me, and tempted no more. It ended, that in reading a comfortable, practical book, the Lord touched my affections, and drew me to Himself, and comforted me, and by the shining of the light of His countenance on my soul, all troubles evanished, and I was made at the same time to see, that I not only had grace, but there was sensible progress and growth in it.

5. There followed upon this a certain decay during the

space of a year; this was about the end of 1664, and continued till the end of 1665, during which time I was usually, though not always, at home. Now, this decay was but from that height of spiritual joy, evangelicalness in working, and degrees in communion with God; there were more tentations, less peace within, and less progress made in the ways of God; so as I was made to live upon my old stock. Attempts, when any were made, were frustrate, and things which formerly relished had now no savour at all. It came hereby to pass, that much dumpishness was upon my spirit, and duties had no effect, so that I accounted the year 1665 an unfortunate year. God had so long not looked upon me that I thought I was clean forgotten. Yet, notwithstanding, all this time there was diligence in duties, and some visits, quickenings, and encouragements, and yet far below what I formerly received. Visitations were neither so great nor the impressions so lasting. The procuring causes of which were: (1) My going from home, where I had freedom from trouble, much company and comforts to take up my heart, as likewise my too great familiarity with a conformist, and delighting too much in his company, Prov. xiii. 20, whereby his company was cursed to me. (2) Sensuality when from home, and little minding of God. (3) There was much pride in despising of others, and thinking too much of myself and of my attainments, and something of a supercilious carriage; therefore did the Lord bring me low. (4) Evil company, and going to places where I had no call, which did much prejudice. I was all this time wrestling to get out of the pit, but was more engaged, conflicting with some horrors of darkness, writing several things of faith, on obedience, on Christ's yoke, on diligence, on Christ and His offices, taking pains on the family; there was not much of the care of the world entrusted to me. I likewise was encouraging of others.

6. But God, that loved me once, did continue to love me to the end, and after many days visited me, so as I not only recovered my former health, but set further forward

than ever I was, thus: (1) By opening the covenant of grace more clearly than ever, and how that Christ was the covenant of the people, and that all stood in Him, and fell in Him; and that He only was the ground of their joy, hope, and confidence. And that God was first in the obligation of the covenant of grace, and that there was no tie on the creature, but the same the creature had on God. And I remember one time in private, the offer of Christ was made appear so real, clear, and full to me, and my duty of receiving so manifest, that I did very sensibly and really accept thereof, which I thought was Christ dwelling in the heart by faith. (2) At the same time I spoke in the family on the first eleven chapters to the Romans, and read Paul's Epistles through; by which I discovered a new light of justification that I never perceived before, and of the law, and of the combat betwixt the flesh and spirit. (3) I received much strength from some private fasts I kept, to the number of three, or four, or five, never using that duty in vain. (4) About the same time in that month I had frequent occasions of converse with godly, able, and exercised Christians, some of them being in soul-trouble at the time, by which many meetings were kept, and therein something of God, whereby I was much bettered. Though in the meantime I found not the sensible effects of these occasions, yet did they me good insensibly. (5) I went to —— being called thereunto, and helped with extraordinary prayer before, and there was assisted to encourage others and exhort, and was helped to shine in a gospel conversation. And here I was counselled to set up one other sail, for before I prayed but twice a day, I hear resolved to set some time apart at mid-day for this effect, and, obeying this, I found the effects to be wonderful. Here I began to learn patience and the nature of repentance, as likewise studied and exercised my former lessons of faith. (6) And there being a semiconformist there who was a little tricky, had carried in reference to the public times with a great deal of carnal wisdom, gravity, and piety, and so [was] in no little esteem, but then under a sad decay, which might easily be perceived by any discerning Christian; he pretended love for the people of God, but had secretly complied with the adversary, and besides did come to synods. I was of nature suspicious, and very easily found him out, and knowing he had conformed and juggled others, and finding him all out of order, the Lord did put it on me to hear him. I first spoke to him privately, then before two friends, and at last, with a great deal of reluctance, I refused to hear him; this was marked by others, and some esteem I had in the country did by these means break his esteem and credit in the country, so as, finding his estimation fallen while he kept the prelates' courts, he was forced at last to forsake them. And the Lord abundantly rewarded this my witnessing for Him, for leaving the country and coming home, the Lord drew me so strongly to Himself as the neck of indispositions was broken, and I made to close fully and heartily with Christ and His work, esteeming it only glorious, so as my heart was never in a better frame, never more assurance and singleness of heart, never more strength to do or suffer for God, never more mortification to the world, and sweetness in the ways of God; and now was I fully resolved always and in all places to glorify Him. Thus was I in my height, in which time the mystery of the covenant of grace and of faith was more and more revealed to me, my spirit elevated to an higher measure of conformity to God's will; my mistakes and objections were daily falling away as the scales from Paul's eyes, and the signs of sanctification were piece and piece appearing, and I thought that ever since the time I acted faith formerly, my day was clearing, and the longer I travelled I found the way the heartsomer, and my light and glory increased beside what it was in the former days and in my wilderness condition. All this time outward troubles and wants continued, though the burden and weight and gnawings of this serpent were abated, only God stayed His rough wind; they lay on, but did neither increase nor trouble.

7. I only observe: (1) When all the world forsakes, then the Lord takes up; and the world's time of loathing is His time of love. I found shelter from Him when forsaken of all. (2) It is "in Him the fatherless findeth mercy." I had no friend but Him, Hos. xiv. 8. (3) It is ordinary with the members to be in distress when the body is unwell. Zion the mother was ill now, and in great distress; and no wonder I should have conformity with her. "Visit me with the gladness of Thy people." (4) God's way of manifesting His love in trouble is rather by supporting and comforting under trouble, than in delivering out of it. (5) Divine consolations and visitations are a sufficient support under, and delivery out of trouble; for, though outward wants continued, yet the evil and sting of them was by the Lord's kindness to my spirit perfectly removed, even as though I had not been afflicted. (6) Piety hath the "promises of this life and of that which is to come." For I find, that as I turned to God, so He showed mercy outwardly to me, I got deliverances in my extremity; and besides, adversaries, though they were lying upon me, yet did no evil. (7) A Christian, life is not one constant course, but hath various changes in it, living and dying, rejoicing and sorrowing, growing and decaying. It is the wicked that "have no changes, and therefore fear not God." And this is, that the manifold wisdom of God, and the various graces of His people, might appear; and to keep them unsettled here, that they might be in a constant watch. (8) It is not a vain thing to seek the Lord; for I never found but some extraordinary thing when I sought Him extraordinarily. (9) A Christian grows and decays as His faith grows and decays. (10) Meditation and study of the covenant of grace, the Gospel, Christ, and faith, I found a most profitable and mightily sanctifying thing. (11) To cast out with the world, and bear the reproach of Christ, is a mighty profitable thing; "He that shall so lose his life shall find it." (12) God is never kinder than when I am under great loads. This is the great advantage of an

afflicted condition, that the Lord pities most, and shows most kindness then. And the more of the world's consolations, there is the less of Christ's consolations; and, therefore, in this the evils of the world are prized above the good thereof. (13) God first learns to bear trouble, then delivers out of trouble. God will ever keep His people, that they be not overwhelmed in trouble; and, when they can bear it, will at last show His power and good-will in delivering them out of it: for, after all this, I was not only upholden, but likewise delivered from my considerable vexations. (14) There is never perfection to a man; in his best, some sin, some want, some enemy is remaining, that will very quickly mingle itself in all the wines of the saints. Perfection is only in heaven; here we should rejoice with trembling, here is, therefore, perpetual sorrow and conflicting.

SECTION VI.

Of a third fiery trial I endured for ten week's space, and how supported and delivered.

There was nothing I remember had ever such influence to settle me as this last storm, which continued very bitter, violent, and sharp during the space of ten weeks, in which my spirit was the most seriously exercised of any time I know; of which I shall speak but briefly, seeing I have it largely set down elsewhere. It was soul-trouble and disquietment I was under, with apprehensions of wrath, and violent tentations of Satan.

1. The grounds and occasions whereof were: (1) Considering grace to be so excellent a thing, as it is called the Divine Nature, I not seeing this glory so as to be amazed thereat, but, on the contrary, finding such wildness, concluded I wanted it. Where is the glory? said I. Are these prayers, affections, duties, and exercises, the Divine Nature; (2) In examining my evidences, I found objections against them, and none could bear water, or could at that time give

me powerful, comfortable, demonstrative evidence. (3) I was pressed to some difficult duties, much contrary to my inclinations; which were, in a word, to take up arms against the world, and to reprove every man and woman, and be free with them anent their estates, and to make this my trade of life; and, because I could not comply with this, I apprehended I was not sincere, but in a natural condition, seeing I had not an universal respect to all God's commands. (4) There were some seeming grounds that might make me think I was unconverted. In a word, the ground of all my trouble was, I was afraid I was yet in a natural condition, and so lost in my sins; and, if so, I knew not what course to take, nor did I think it probable I should ever come out of it, if I were yet in it.

2. My frame and condition was: (1) The terribleness of a natural condition was represented to me to the life; and no evil was so great as sin, especially a sinful nature; and, my evidences being blotted, it was so much the more terrible. (2) The Lord likewise as clothed with fury was represented to my soul. (3) The devil, getting leave, did most cruelly, tyrannically, and furiously batter my soul with objections tending to discourage me, and to create evil thoughts of God in me, and to make me believe that all this while I was living in an unconverted condition and delusion. (4) That which was not the least of my afflictions was, that I could not know my condition certainly. Oh how happy if I knew whether converted or unconverted! for then would I know what to do; but, living in this uncertainty, I am most miserable: for I had but apprehensions I was unconverted. (5) In examining of the causes why the Lord trysted me with this sudden and great storm, I thought there was none as to particular guilt, and I thought it drave at something else than punishment for particular faults. (6) My melancholy constitution, and want of company and employment, did much further my trouble. (7) There would be some calms and quietness of spirit for a great part of the day, by reading of the Scriptures especially;

and Satan would cease for a while. (8) It was not with me as in other troubles: for, through grace, I was helped to make some head against Satan; I despaired not at all, nor did by any act of positive judgment conclude I would be damned; but only I saw hell, and sin, and the wrath of God; and the apprehension was terrible. Yea, there would be great attempts of faith sticking more close to God than ever, so that I never so strongly and sensibly believed; yea, I thought, as matters stood sometimes, it was impossible I should be cast off. And many times was my heart fixed, so that I was like a rock against whom all the billows in hell would dash, yet did my bow stand strong, and I never had such assurance of faith. (9) I had a deep impression of the things of God; a natural condition and sin appeared, and I felt it worse than hell itself; the world and vanities thereof terrible, and exceeding dangerous; it was fearful then to have ado with it, or to be rich. I saw its day coming; Scripture expressions were weighty; a Saviour was a big thing in my eyes; Christ's agonies were then earnest with me, and I thought that all my days I was in a dream till now, or like a child in jest, and I thought the world was sleeping. O but I thought Shepherd and Rutherford spoke and wrote feelingly! Shame, trouble, and affliction, want and poverty, were sweet and secure. (10) Yet was I wearied of my life, and preferred strangling before it; my life was bitterness to me, and sorrow did consume me, so as there was a sensible influence on my body, and I looked like a man come from the grave; yet did none know my trouble. There was a great work to be wrought in me, and it was death to me to think to endure the power and working of God that should produce this effect, although I were little more than passive in it. (11) Duties of prayer and reading, only before I yoked with them, were a terror, and to go in private with this dead heart seemed hell itself; though, when I was engaged, they were sweet. The night was sweet, because I had some rest; but the morning was as the shadow of death, because I was to conflict. I would even have been content to have lain still perpetually, my spirits were so overfoughten. (12) The devil rested not in the meantime violently and unseasonably to press some strict duties, seeking to undo body and spirit at once, driving furiously as Jehu did.

3. The manner how the Lord supported me, and did me good, and at last delivered me out of this, was by these means: 1*st*, By making me considerate; for, at the first assault, the end of which was to persuade me I was unconverted, this assertion was so strongly and violently threaped upon me, that ere I knew I was dung on my back, and my soul burdened and oppressed, ere I knew how or why. When, therefore, I found these weights, and my spirit overwhelmed, and the clouds up, I remembered David's words, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" So said I, What is this? and why is it thus with me? shall I continually live in an implicit faith, or on my own apprehensions? and shall I be condemned, and live miserably, and never know why? Let us think and consider on this matter; there may some mystery lie at the bottom. Come. therefore, my soul, let us see what is it that ails thee. Well, I see thou art troubled, and spiritually troubled, and for a spiritual cause; now, what is this spiritual cause? Because I found it was a suspicion that I was yet in a natural condition, and a stranger to Christ. Now, what grounds have we for this? and let us see what is to be done, and hear patiently all assertions and threaps; let this rain fall to the ground, and then fall thou to exercise. Hereupon my spirit became composed and considerate; and, having the use and exercise of my reason, it did much advantage to me, and made me that I was not like a child driven hither and thither: I was, therefore, content to ding the bottom out of this, and to examine it to the full. 2*dly*, I thought it expedient for settling of myself, and keeping my ground unshaken by the batteries of tentations, to lay down some practical conclusions, to which I would ever stick, and always follow, whatever came; which did me much good,

and I did draw them from Christ's agonies. (1) To continue praying still, and looking up to God, and never to give over duties; obey still, come what will. (2) Never despair, but always trust and depend, and keep up an interest in God. (3) Be humble and submissive; "Not my will but thine be done." Resign yourself to God in this exercise; take not the tutory of thyself in this hazardous sea upon you; let Him quicken, deaden, wound, and comfort as He pleases. I cannot express what advantage I found by this. 3*dly*, Means was, By being kept by the power of God in the use of all means, of praying, and reading the Scriptures, and meditating, whatever tentations I had to the contrary. And though at first I saw little comfort in these duties, but said, as those Israelites of Saul, Will these duties save me from my spiritual enemies? yet by practising I ever found strength and comfort by them, especially Scripture, in which I found an unusual weight and sweetness. 4*thly*, The Lord would suggest some seasonable and calming word into my soul, such as this, "It is good for a man to hope, and quietly to wait for the salvation of God;" then it is not good to be discouraged nor casten down, 5*thly*, I was made to understand that the spirit of bondage in itself was not good, from these words, "Perfect love casteth out fear." This I knew not before, and therefore I ever desired a law-work, and durst never meddle with consolations till I had found the law-work; and now, if my terrors and tentations had ceased, I would grieve for that intermission, as though I had lost some precious thing. And this made me more submissive to the Lord's way of guiding me in my exercises, as likewise more freely to use consolations, and to seek recovery out of my present bondage; yea, I found that these terrors and fears did me evil in their own nature, though the Lord, I found, did accidentally bring good out of them. 6*thly*, The Lord made me one day understand, Satan had a great hand in my trouble, especially in labouring to create evil thoughts of God in my soul, in tempting me to despair and give over, and discouraging me, and making me think I should never be better; in a violent unseasonable pressing of duties. And hence I reasoned, If these fears proceed from Satan, why should I entertain them? Can any truth or good proceed from him? This made me suspect all was suggested to me tending to fear, and more rationally to ponder what was represented. 7*thly*, I fell seriously and diligently to examine this whole matter. I considered the nature of my exercise and trouble, the grounds of it, and the weight of objections; as likewise I fell upon examination of my state, I laid down my conclusions and rules, I set down my objections against my sincerity, I pondered them by the line of Scripture, and answered them; I did likewise according to Scripture judge of the marks I had of my own sincerity, and examined what might be said; I compared my state with the rule and with saints; and in the conclusion I found a marvellous light of God's Spirit, through the word, shining on my soul, and I found that according to the Scripture I was converted, and that the names, qualities, practices, and exercises of saints did agree with me; yea, I found something in me wherein I went beyond any hypocrite, though I was the least of saints. I did utterly cast aside all marks that I had read in practical books, and did examine them by Scripture; and I found the most part of them unsound and not well cautioned, and some not altogether false, but inconsiderately expressed, and the reader very apt to mistake. As likewise there was discovered, through this examination, many of mine own mistakes in the nature of sanctification. Oh, what need is there of wisdom and light from above, in giving of marks! and what a great sin is it, either to write or speak marks at random? It is true what Shepherd saith, "We have need of a special spirit here." This cost me many weeks' exercise, and some years before this too; but the most sensible and effectual discovery of myself was now. O the benefit of consideration and a deliberate judgment! 8*thly*, God, by a strong hand, humbled me, and made me submissive, from a sense and sight of the Lord's sovereignty, wisdom, and eternal holiness, and from a sense of my own wildness ("Good is the will of the Lord"), so as I was made silent before God; which silence did much abate the boisterousness of this storm, so that my heart was kept calm and made to comply with dispensations; so as I said from my heart, My will is evil, and God is good; and better He have His will, than I that am sinful; He cannot do ill or wrong. And for this cause I did draw up some considerations to submission, which then were sensibly prevalent with me, and by considering of which I would usually allay the raisings of my heart when they would appear. 9*thly*, I did likewise consider on some comfortable consolations and considerations tending to hope and encouragement, which I drew up, and would usually comfort my soul with them in my dark hours and dumpish fits, and did find my labour ordinarily not in vain; though sometimes nothing would do but the immediate hand of God, "that I might know man liveth not by bread, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." 10*thly*, As likewise, in respect I found great indispositions and unwillingness to duties, and discouragements thereto, I drew up several considerations and motives to stir me up thereto, which in my fits of sloth I would use to awaken my soul, and would usually find them effectual. 11*thly*, In examining that difficult duty of reproving, and considering it seriously, the Lord showed much light and comfort, both in the nature of the duty, and how to go about it; wherein Satan had a hand in pressing it; and that my unwillingness thereto did proceed not from infirmity; and that my omission was not in the substance of the duty, but in the manner and degree of freedom, boldness, and compassion, and did proceed from ignorance and unbelief. 12*thly*, I found likewise much mercy, good-will, tenderness, and care of Christ towards me in this present exercise; and much good did it to me, so that the storm was now much over. 13*thly*, But that which did me most good was, a more full discovery of the covenant of grace, meditations of the Gospel, of Christ's gentle nature, as likewise some particular promises that were by the operation of the Spirit very clearly applied; among which these were the chief, 1 Tim. i. 15, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation." O what of life and sweetness was discovered in that one word one evening after supper, John iii. 17, "God sent not His son to condemn the world!" And that word, Psal. lxv. 5, God is the "confidence of all the ends of the earth;" and He "justifies the ungodly." "They that know Thee will put their trust in Thee." "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness." And that Scripture, 1 Cor. i. 30, "God hath made Christ wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.' And that in John xv. 16, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." From which these truths were made clear to me: (1) That nothing in man is the first ground of hope or despair. (2) That the whole ground of our hopes is in Christ alone. (3) That sinners have right to absolute promises; or the first ground of faith is an absolute promise. Christ is not a person with whom they have nothing ado, but is their hope and salvation; and these promises are sayings, though absolute, to lay hold on for acceptation. (4) That Christ's relation is to men as sinners, and not as to whole or righteous: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." It is with sinners Christ hath ado, and not to condemn them but to give them life; and, when they cannot come to Him for life, to seek them. The fathers must lay up for the children, and not they for the parents. (5) Such is the nature of Christ, that He only came to show mercy, hath no wrath or law, came not to condemn: "Fury is not in me." And that it is as unreasonable to expect condemnation from Christ, as to expect cold water from fire; and, therefore, whosoever knows Him cannot but believe in Him: and that there is nothing in Christ but what is matter of joy and comfort. (6) All salvation depends on Christ's good-will only, and everything relating thereto, all which is made ours. (7) That God Himself is the drawer up of the sinner's security for heaven and blessedness; Christ is "made of God, wisdom, righteousness," etc.; "I have given Him for a covenant to the people." (8) That the Lord bestows this right freely and absolutely, which free promise is the ground of faith, and not the purchase of faith. (9) That nothing damns but unbelief, in not pressing the Lord with these promises, all which are comprehended in that one word, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ came to save sinners." Here now was I fixed on a rock that was able to bide all storms. Is Christ then the ground of all my hopes? and do my hopes depend wholly on Him? and have I a promise that all will be well? and is this promise that to which I must take myself? and is this promise given freely of God? Surely then, though I see nothing in myself but what is matter of grief, sorrow, and despair, yet here is matter of hope; I cannot misbelieve, unless I reflect on Christ. Shall I misdoubt Him, who is all mercy and no wrath, who came not at all to damn, whose offices and relations are all good? These and the like did quiet me, knowing that all my happiness was freely secured in Christ Jesus alone, in whom I was complete; yea, I found the great end of this storm was to draw me off myself, to live in and to depend wholly on Christ for strength, justification, and comfort. 14*thly*, My natural melancholy was cured by divertisements; for I had a call to go elsewhere, where employment and godly company did me much good as to the refreshing of my spirit. And thus by these means was the storm gradually allayed; the best trial for me I ever endured.

4. The ends of which dispensations were: (1) To try, exercise, and strengthen my faith, which was never so lively exercised, nor did ever endure such a conflict, nor ever had such sure footing; for by considering the Gospel, though it were granted I was never converted, yet sure I am I ought to come to Christ, and look up to Him, and expect from

Him, and be of good cheer, seeing God is the "confidence of all the ends of the earth." And my consolation must be as solid and strong as the ground thereof, so that with this shield I abide all darts, this answereth all objections, this is "the Rock higher than I." (2) To make me a little more serious, and to have a deeper and weightier apprehension of the things of God; for the truth is, till this time I looked on myself, and the most part of professors, to be but in jest with their religion; and I bless the Lord, some of these impressions remain still. (3) To discover to me the evil of the world, of the pleasures, profit, and honour thereof; and to bring my soul to a compliance with the cross of Christ, as that whereon most security and quietness is to be found: "He that loseth his life shall find it." The world is an evil, and only evil, the great bar that hinders from Christ; it is loadened with sin, full of danger, and enmity to God; it is Christ's competitor, rival, and enemy. And this was not only discovered in me, but the aversion and fear of the world was in some measure wrought in me. (4) To acquaint me with Satan's devices, whereby he hinders the work of salvation, the many sophisms and mistakes of my own heart in the nature of sanctification; it made me search more narrowly into many things than ever I did. (5) To make me esteem the Scriptures, and walk more closely by them in all my ways; for they only speak aright of God, of dispensations; they are the foundation of hope and faith, and we must judge of things according as they are represented in Scripture, and not by reason or fancy. (6) To stir me up to be more profitable to others, which was a great challenge now, and the neglect of it a heavy burden; and the duty itself was much pressed at this time. (7) To live off myself and sense, on the Lord Jesus alone; and not on Him as felt, but on Him as given in His word and promise; and not on any thing of Him to be given here, but what we are to receive in heaven. The conclusion was this, My grace is sufficient; "When I am weak, then am I strong;" and here is rest and life. And by this storm, and the conclusions I then laid, I became more settled, and less shaken with tentations; and this did much establish me in faith, patience, humility, and duty.

5. I will conclude with a few observations: (1) Soul-trouble hath sometimes a sweetness in it, for, considering this was the hand of God, I laid myself flat under it. Now, Lord, let me never out of this furnace till my dross go away. (2) I found soul-trouble not good in itself but evil, and that it produces much weakness and aversion from duty. (3) When God is angry, every thing is terrible. Duties, meat, drink, and company, had a hell stamped upon them, and a little loss, having wrath stamped on it, is a world of evil. (4) The world is a dangerous thing and a great evil, and the comforts of it a hell. It is good to be continually afflicted here; "In the world ye shall have tribulation." Most of my exercise did drive at this. (5) Whatever our exercise or tentations be, it is profitable to pray and continue in the means. (6) It is good to be considerate, and not to be rash in closing with apprehensions and suggestions. (7) It is a sad affliction to an exercised soul to want good company, and evil carnal company is a hell itself. (8) Soul-trouble hath its time; it is not always alike violent, but I find sometimes a calm, and at other times it comes in stounds and fits; the evil hour. (9) We should not murmur that the Lord doth not lead us according to our minds; but, in exercises especially, we should let the Lord guide us as best seems Him, and a patient surrender of ourselves doth much good. (10) There may be many sweet hours and little deliverances in a soul exercise ere all be done. I was many times caught up to heaven, but anon plunged to hell. (11) The best mean of settlement is to live by faith in Jesus Christ alone, and to live at a distance from the world. (12) A soul may have many enemies to wrestle with in one soul-trouble, but he hath not the same one to wrestle always with. Sometimes he hath the wrath of God, sometimes

an evil heart; and the soul should continually conflict with one of these at once, according as they invade him. (13) No soul-trouble will cure all evils perfectly; they but help in part. (14) The great end of such trials is to exercise faith, and to waken people, and to make them more serious. Many other things might be observed. This befell me when I was twenty-seven years of age, in November and December 1665.

SECTION VII.

Of what befell me thereafter.

1. Notwithstanding of this furnace, yet, when I was out of it, I found much dross. For (1) I was grievously oppressed with a spirit of sloth and indisposition to all manner of duties. (2) There was a legal spirit that made me act in fear, and not in love or in faith to be accepted, which did represent God as a judge, and that He had evil ends in desiring obedience, whereby there was much forced work. (3) A kind of aversion and strangeness to God and heaven, not having such intimate and loving thoughts of Him, and withal a loatheness to go to heaven as a strange place. (4) Likewise I found a strong league with the world, and the power of it considerable and strong, which hath cost me until this day much conflict and hard work. (5) My deadness and ignorance remained and grew upon me, so that I was dark in my conceiving, and untender in my apprehensions; so that several errors in my conversation were vented, such as idle words, vain thoughts, excess in the use of lawful comforts, pride in thought and speech, departing from God.

2. Yet did some of my dross go away with this furnace; and blessed be the Lord that made this trial profitable to me. For (1) I was more diligent in doing good to others than formerly, and therefore would be oftentimes minding the poor and ignorant in private, praying for them, thinking

of the way to do them good, and stirring up my soul thereunto. And as there were some thoughts of this in private, so there was outward and practical effecting of this. I would go to their houses, instruct and exhort them, and pray in their houses, and occasionally instruct them and others whom I met (though of late I have been more remiss in this), and thereby found much good to myself, and my gifts in this increased. (2) I was more strict and tender in my conversation than formerly, and durst not take such liberty, and therefore cried out against that looseness and wantonness that I saw but too common. (3) I was by this made more acquainted with spiritual exercises of the Lord's method and of Satan's devices, with the nature of sanctification, and the many mistakes anent it. A great deal of my mists and confusions were hereby blown away, and many hid things of darkness brought to light. I understood by this much Scripture better than formerly. (4) My spirit was made more serious, and the matters of salvation and common truths more deeply engraven, and made more weighty to me. I saw another sight, and had another manner of feeling of sin, wrath, heaven, and hell; I prized Christ and grace more; I feared sin, Satan, and hell more. Truths were more lively and sensible upon my spirit; the matters of God's law appeared great by this. (5) I found my spirit more settled and established on Christ, and less liable to shakings and tentations, so that I have lived as to assurance and faith of my interest, and of Christ's love, from that day to this, more secure than ever, being (as I conceived) better rooted, and having stronger foundations than before, and better acquaint with the exercise of faith. (6) I found my spirit by this more meekened and tamed, and less hasty, the violent bitter quality taken away, and I, as it were, broken and ploughed, and so more inured to the yoke, so as nothing came wrong. I understand now something of Christian patience, am less amazed with disappointments, and more submissive, quiet, and silent. (7) The world appeared vain, terrible, and bitter; and the evil thereof prized more than the good thereof; and the yoke, cross, and reproach of Christ more lovely. (8) More diligent in private duties of reading, meditation, and prayer, set to conflict with sin more strongly. And some impressions of this yet remain.

3. As for my exercise and progress of life (1) After my inward terrors as to their power were removed, some degrees remained, that would at some times overwhelm my heart, but did not last. (2) I was smitten in my body thereafter with a painful boil under my oxter, with which I had been threatened some years before, which, with the pain thereof, did at first cast me into a fever, and my breath was stopped by the oppression of the spirits, which made me have some impressions of death. During which time, Satan was let out again, and was most violent in his tentations; and my heart was so casten down, that one afternoon, being to draw in the Lord's yoke, there was such faintness, weakness, and aversion to duty, that I thought I should never endure it, and was not far from casting it off altogether; but God pitied the anguish of my soul, and did break these spiritual bonds, and put my heart in frame. During this sickness He miraculously allayed the pain of my boil, and speedily, and that without means, cured it; for, however, I bought some things to prevent it, yet, looking on it as a punishment from God, I knew not if I could be free to take the rod out of His hand, and to counterwork Him. And, indeed, I lost nothing by this, for, coming and giving my cheeks to this smiter, my chastisement was very gentle, and of short continuance, so as I was helped to continue in duties; and when the boil brake, I resolved to go more mightily and diligently about the Lord's work than ever. I by this means prized health more. (2) Made more diligent in duties, had a conflict with death, I found it easy to leave the world. Yet was both Christ and heaven strange, and so had not such desires to be with Him, nor longing, because I was not a good servant, had not my work done, nor walked so closely with Him. (3) The Lord one day

represented the evil of the world to me. This was my first exercise. This was in February 1666. In March and April I continued in a wrestling condition, and was sometimes in M., sometimes at home, and I lay groaning under and fighting with my indispositions to duties. Strange thoughts of God and spirit of bondage in my actings, with some terrors, which could not continue long. (3) In summer, thereafter, the hardness of my heart began to mollify, and my bonds broke on a Sabbath-day's afternoon, while others were at church, and I stayed at home. "I called to mind the days of old," and some of the Lord's ways with me, which opened the doors of my soul, and love quickened in longing after Him, and grieving for His absence and for my ways, which disposition continued and strengthened me. (4) Thereafter I was put to learn a new exercise, which was, to observe providences, and to consider the ends of God's particular and general providences, the ends of afflictions, of sins, of backslidings, of indispositions, and to remark some steps of love in them, which did me much good. He did let me see much love in dispensations, enlightened me in my duties, kept me from wrong constructions, and did much establish and comfort me. (5) Being to quit our chief dwelling and lands, according to my transaction three years ago, and some mistakes betwixt me and relations falling out, I stayed alone, and went to another contiguous shire, where were some lively Christians and my very dear friends, with whom I spent time profitably, edifying and building up one another. There I resolved to set up extraordinary days of humiliation again, and so effectually that a glory was seen in the ways of God and of His people which I saw not before, and love to Christ advanced. (6) After I came home I set up humiliation-days, and made it my exercise to conflict with and overcome the world, to close fully and wholly with Christ, to glorify Him with all my heart, and Him only. But it would not do, notwithstanding of some violent attempts I made; whence terrors issued, yet not altogether in vain, because hunger was increased, as likewise knowledge. (7) About the middle of harvest, through meditation on the Law and the Gospel and the easy yoke of Christ, the spirit of bondage and legal actings begun to be cast out, and I in my acting was helped to be more willing and less constrained, doing things more evangelically and freely, and by which I found greater strength to serve Christ. And I found that word of the Israelites to Rehoboam true in me to Christ, "Make my yoke easier, and I will serve Thee," and the easiness of this yoke to be the great motive He presseth us with to draw in it: That the Lord doth accept little off our hands, and will Himself help. This, with the consideration of the ends of God's requiring duties, did much strengthen me in them, and discovered much of Christ's love, and made His yoke easy and lovely. (8) About winter thereafter, I found my heart warming to Christ, and the aversion to Him wearing off, through rubbing over in my memory some steps of the Lord's providences and dealings towards me. And there my eyes were first opened to see an infinite fountain of consolation and love which before was hid to me; there I remembered all the pains the Lord took in preparing me for Himself, how much He suffered at my hands, all the care He had of me in my wilderness condition; how He humbled me, convinced me, and how many times His visitations did uphold my spirit. Then did I see love in all the tract of the Lord's dealings with me, God in all this pursuing me constantly with loving-kindness. (9) I found likewise my aversion to heaven wearing away, and that any apprehensions I had of this kind did proceed from a mistake: for one day, as I was praying, and earnestly desiring after communion with Christ and more conformity to God's image, and mourning for my want of this, it was suggested to me, Why dost thou complain of thy great aversion to heaven? for what is heaven but enjoyment of Christ and perfect holiness? therefore, in prizing the one I prize the other. And from this it proceeded that I longed to be in heaven. Shall I think ill, said I, to be with Him, in whose company I only find peace and quietness? who hath with His visitations so often refreshed my spirit, without whom I can do nothing, and without whom I am hell itself; who hath been seeking me so passionately, and whom I have so many days been seeking? (10) About the same time likewise I was convinced of a great sin of unthankfulness, the evil and sinfulness of which was discovered, and desires to abound in this grace of thankfulness, which was thus occasioned. I found some others that had outgone me far in love and gratitude, speaking much of Chist's love and kindness to them, and what they were meeting with, and how much they made of small visits. Oh, ungrateful wretch (said I to myself), thou art oftentimes meeting with quickening consolations and visitations, by which thy dying life is preserved, and yet take no notice of it, and, like Haman, ye say, "What is all this to me?" Not one thankful acknowledgment for all this, nor one loving word spoken in commendation of Christ for all this. I judged quickenings and visitations of this kind but common, and ordinary, and small, because I saw not Christ in great fulgor and glory. That which after some time did heal this evil in my soul was, considering that though those things in themselves were but mean, yet they were not the effects of my own pains and endeavours, who without Christ can do nothing; but were the breathings and gifts of God's Spirit, and therefore, in respect they are from Him, to be infinitely prized; yea, the purchase of Christ's blood, and a pledge and testimony of the Lord's kindness, and therefore to be received, and I am not to look to the gift but the giver. The least of favours and tokens from a prince is highly valued. And this did help me to thankfulness, and I did set a value upon mercies. (11) I was at this time pressed vehemently to close walking, to an entire, cordial, and full resignation of myself to God, to keep distance with the world, to be for the Lord and Him only, and for none other; and was made sensible of one point of loose walking, that I did not endeavour to observe the Lord's providences, and that I did not walk in His counsel and depend on Him, acknowledging Him in all my ways. And this the Lord likewise helped. (12) I began a little afterwards to study patience; I got this lesson in my hand, and made some small progress therein: Patience I thought and took up under the notion of the soul's invincible going on in duties, notwithstanding of all evils; when a man keeps his place and ground, and stands out like a rock, not amazed with any amazement, not discouraged nor rankled, not fainting, not giving over, but continuing in a constant frame of spirit. What I sought not I learned, and what I sought I got not. God answered my prayers, though not in my way, and showed He accepted them; He led me in His way to heaven, and not in mine. (13) At last, that the warning I got five years since in the South might be fulfilled of the bonds and afflictions that were abiding me, I was taken with caption for a debt which I had paid. Only my trustee and near relation, who received the money from me to be given to my creditor, did knavishly apply it to his own use; for which, I, not paying it, was taken and kept three days in a chamber, till course was taken with it; which occasioned my going South, where I continued much of two years, sometimes in the South, and sometimes in the North. My condition during this time was a wrestling condition with the sons of Zeruiah that were too strong for me; little or no overcoming, yet violent wrestling. Some work I got done: I wrote a Treatise of Faith, of the Covenant of Grace; I wrote a Treatise of forty sheets of paper, on several subjects useful for the times; I wrote also a Treatise against hearing the curates; as likewise, I wrote this Book of my Life, in which I found marvellous assistance, and found it a blessed mean to warm my heart with love to Christ, to see through many intricacies of my life which were before as a mist to me, and did tend much to my settling. As likewise, the Lord blessed my fellowship so to the South country professors, that severals of them were awakened; and generally my conversation was edifying, and was someway shining, so that I received much honour thereby; and while I honoured God, the Lord honoured me. I kept Christian fellowship with them, prayed with and exhorted them, which was not in vain, especially in Edinburgh, where I sometimes spake four times in a week. The scope of my discourses was in exalting holiness; against a slight work of grace; against looseness and laxness; against formality; against sloth and unprofitableness, and pressing them to be doing good; against discouragements and unbelief, and pressing to believe; as likewise, against complying with the prelates and curates, studying to render them as odious as I could, and my pains were not in vain.

4. *Lastly*, It pleased the Lord by degrees likewise to look favourably on my outward condition, and did piece and piece deliver me from my afflictions and vexatious debts and wants, and now hath in some measure exalted mine head, and given me by strange providences what He had taken from me. For I humbled myself under the sense of the calamities of our family, and my own particular wants; I besought Him to keep us from utter destruction. And the Lord was pleased to hear; He destroyed by death my chief adversaries, I found shifts to pay my many petty debts, gained our law-action, and was restored to some of my ancient possessions again; though I be miserably undone and vexed with multiplicity of business and evil neighbours, as likewise I am under the guilt of many broken vows, and find much prejudice by the smiles of the world, and less kindness from the Lord, because I stand less in need of it now. Thus have I briefly run over the most memorable circumstances in all my life until this time, being now thirty years of age and unmarried. I have been the more brief in what concerns these last six years, in respect I have them at more length contained in my daily diaries, and because I purpose to come over several things touching my natural condition and state, my exercises, tentations, evils, duties, and course of life, in the next chapter, to which I shall refer any thing of this nature.

CHAP. VII.

RELATING SOME THINGS TOUCHING MY PRESENT CONDITION.

SECTION I.

Wherein are contained some general personal observations in reference to myself.

1. AFTER a long and serious search into my estate before God, I am by the Lord's works of love towards me, and His works of grace in my soul, made to conclude that I am born over again, and that there is not only a formal partial change wrought, such as may be in hypocrites, but that I am visited with the salvation and love of His chosen. For I find a great and universal change wrought by an almighty mean in my soul, growing rather than decaying; so that thus I stand fixed as to this matter. I have both word and seal, work and carriage for it. Yet, *2dly*, Do I find this my belief of my interest much shaken and sore assaulted by sin, which falls like a blot upon all my evidences, and takes away the comfort of them, and fills me with some sudden apprehensions all may be wrong, though these many years, by a positive act of judgment, I was not suffered to conclude my unsoundness, but rather, rationally and deliberately weighing the matter, made to conclude I was converted. *3dly*, I have thereupon concluded it to be my duty to be thankful, to draw near to God by faith, and to search by prayer, meditation, and reading, my estate more exactly; to consider the nature of sanctifica-

tion more exactly, and ponder objections and grounds of doubting; to pray to the Lord daily to open my estate to me, to practise obedience, and go on in the exercise of faith, love, and humility and other graces, to be marking providences, and the Lord's carriage to my soul.

2. I find I am exceeding sinful, and one compassed with more than ordinary infirmities. Before conversion I have been suffered to run out in more open acts of rebellion than others, such as swearing, cursing, blasphemy, drunkenness, Sabbath-breaking, sinning against light and conscience, extraordinary strangeness and unprofitableness, greater and manier blots in my conversation than in others, having greater aggravating circumstances. So that I think I grieve the Lord more than any other; I have a harder, blinder, and more carnal heart than others have; so that I conclude myself the least of saints, not worthy to be called a saint. (2) And therefore think I am called to humility and submission. (3) To love the Lord beyond others, as having forgiven me most. (4) To be more watchful against sin, having such an ill heart within, so ready to slip; and to walk in greater fear, and to be more diligent. For, if the iron be blunt, it needeth the greater force. (5) To depend most on the Lord Jesus, as having least in myself, and therefore to make up all my wants with His fulness; that I must live wholly on Him. The sick need the physician. (6) To press me to be more holy in time to come for a revenge; that as I have "yielded my members weapons of unrighteousness," etc.

3. I have been and am like to be extraordinarily afflicted. I have ever found trouble in the world, and God in His providence doth ever sow enmity betwixt me and it. I have never gotten rest for the sole of my foot there, but its embraces are poison, thorns, prejudice, and vexation. Sometimes and ordinarily, great and extraordinary wants to supply credit and debts; great disappointments, and evil-will from the men of the world, rejected and looked down upon by professing friends in my extremities, so that I know not one of my nearest relations and friends but have put great dis-

obligations upon me, and have been bitterness to me, and have made me weary of life, the people of God only excepted, who (as they were never able to help me in my outward condition, yet) did never trouble or vex me. The Lord reward their labour of love. And if the world hath smiled on me, and given me some of her favours, and I thinking to rest me upon them, they proved like the staff of Egypt, and at last failed me and pricked my hand: it was the Lord only that supported me and kept from sinking, and it was the mere providence of God that did me any good or deliverance, and none other: and I am like to find the good of the world more prejudicial to me than the evil thereof, and to vex my spirit mo (2) I conclude myself hereupon called to live at distance with the world, to set my heart by it, to fight and conflict with it, to be mortified to it, and to look to another rest, seeing this is not it, to set my affections on heaven where Christ is; as likewise, to look on this as a token of love and of good, that "I am not of the world," for then "the world would love me;" and, lastly, to arm myself with admirable patience and fortitude to endure the evils of the world constantly without fainting.

4. I have a weak, complying, soft nature, contrary to my will and judgment; so that I find an averseness to that which both my judgment and will are for. I bless God for a clear judgment and understanding; for I am much given to pry and search into the bottom of things, and therein have been assisted. But my miserable soft nature yields to everything, and this makes all duties that are attended with labour and boldness a great burden to me. I am judged by men clean contrary, to be rude and contrary to all men; but little know they the wrestling I have with my own heart, and what a torment I bred to myself when I did not comply with men. Oh, how much need of grace and divine assistance! for no less will do my turn; I have nature always to resist. (2) I hereupon find a great resistance to all manner of duties; so that there is no duty I go about, but I find

Satan and the power of sin in me ready to resist me in it: and I get nothing easily done, but over a mountain of difficulties, heart and providences and all crossing. What a mighty work to pray, to meditate, to speak or do anything! Oh sloth! (3) My life is a life of faith, and not of sense; I know little sense or dawting; the Word is my only rule. (4) I find God's love and my religion manifested rather in doing for God, than in fellowship with God. I see no great love in manifestations of Himself, but in sanctifying me and enabling me to my duty. And the most of my religious exercises are in reference to searching out truths and mysteries in a humble and fixed frame of spirit; and some courage and strength to do some work for glorifying God, and edifying my neighbour. (5) I gather love and good, not at first, or by any one dispensation at first, but by a continued tract of kindness. It is from many things jointly I gather love, rather than from any one particular; and I find good after a long time, rather than at the beginning. God drives His work in me leisurely, and by degrees, and not at once; I know few extraordinary things. Christ's motion in my soul is without din or noise; I see, by this, need of patience. (6) My joy, happiness, and hope, is more in what is in Christ, and in the promise, and to be fulfilled in heaven to me, than in anything I find in myself by sense. I were "of all men the most miserable," and hated of God, and little beloved, if I had nought else to look to. (7) I not only find an opposition from my nature, and sin, and Satan, to duties, but from providences; and this I judged as trials, and to be for the exercise of patience.

5. That which most in earth I desire is, to do great things for God, to suffer much for Him, to be signal in honouring of Him, to finish my ministry. I contemn and undervalue the world and carnal folk as dung, and all the world's kindness, though my nature will not suffer me to express it; my "spirit is willing," but herein I find "the flesh is weak." My unprofitableness and sinfulness is my greatest grief in the world; I had rather be cast out of

God's comfortable presence (so as not to be hated of Him) than out of His service. I have been sometimes thinking that, if these times last, my heart will break, if I be continually shut up in this way, and all the passages stopt of doing for the Lord.

SECTION II.

Declaring some strong evils under which I mourn, and against which I wrestle.

I find it with me as with the Israelites, Judges i., that there were some nations that they could not drive out; so I may say that there are some strong evils that I cannot get mastered at all, and which continually afflict me, and discourage me.

1*st Evil* is, That distance the Lord keeps with me in word, in prayer, in providences, commands, threatenings, promises, mercies, judgements; I find little of God in them, so that I may say, "I am more brutish than any man, and have not the knowledge of the Holy one." O how little of Him is known! I dare not deny but I see Him darkly and confusedly, whereby my soul longs for Him, and mourns for His absence as the greatest evil; but yet I see Him not distinctly and clearly in His glory with the seeing of the eye by that marvellous light. O Lord, my blindness! Oh blessed heaven, where we shall see God, not as in a mystery, but "know as we are known!" and, alas! I know no more of Him than before. This calls for mourning and humiliation, and addressing to Christ to open the eyes of the blind; and for purity and holiness, for these "shall see God;" and for "following on to know the Lord" in His attributes, in His Son Jesus, in His Word, and in His providences, by observing them.

2*d Evil* is, The low measure of God's love vented to my soul; manifestations and influences run very low, and beat weakly in my soul; I find not in God what doth abundantly satisfy; I meet not with that which is called "the power of God." In a word, I am kept in a low condition, and very mean. Sanctification, light, life, and comfort, are but sparingly letten out to me; and in my fulness I cry, I want still. This is to humble me, and make me long for heaven. Though, blessed be the Lord's name, I meet with something, yea, more than I deserve, or ever I have been thankful for; nor did I ever kindle a fire to Him for nought. I comfort myself with this that I have the earnest, and that is but small in respect of the stock; a little does arle the bargain as well as much. That this world and time is a time of wants; and, therefore, the Lord's people are a generation of seekers; that there is much in Christ, in the promise, and much to be letten out in heaven. I get these directions: (1) To be humble. (2) To be living on the fulness of Christ, and abundant joys of heaven. (3) To be thankful for small mercies, for that is the way to get more. (4) To long for heaven, and weary of the earth. (5) To study mortification to the world, for "the rich are sent away empty;" to keep a room for Christ. (6) To labour much; for "the soul of the diligent shall be made fat." (7) To do good to others; for "he that watereth shall be watered."

3*d Evil* is, Security and slightness of spirit as to spiritual things. I am not so sensibly affected with the evil of sin and of a natural condition, as to wonder at God's patience, to tremble for fear, and smitten with compassion to others who are yet in their sins. Oh! I am but in jest, and half sleeping and waking; though I know that nothing lies nearer, nor am I more exercised with anything than with spiritual things. I see no help for this, but serious consideration of the great matters of the law, and continual prayers to God for awakening and seriousness, and less seriousness in worldly affairs, for these take away the heart.

4*th Evil.* I can seldom win to the believing, joyful, and comfortable thoughts of heaven. Though I really prize the thing, to wit, enjoyment of God in Christ for evermore, and perfect conformity to Him, yet have I not as yet come to any measure of perfection in this lesson; the great cause of which I take to be, that I am so little in the endeavour of this. It is something present, rather than what is to come, that comforts me. Oh to see this glory as mine, so as to be made heavenly thereby!

5*th Evil.* That I cannot, in the act of closing with Christ, cordially, fully, and clearly give up myself to the Lord Jesus alone for evermore; that I cannot expressly and cordially marry with Him. Oh for a day of espousals! It is true, my heart really closes with Christ, and hates the world, and my desires are, to be for Him and Him only, to do and suffer much for Him; but, when I come to covenant with Him, there is deadness, heartlessness, double-mindedness, confusions, and ignorance, whereby much unfixedness doth arise. I can neither covenant with Him as a spouse, nor live with Him as a spouse. Oh my unstedfastness in His covenant, and dealing falsely with Him! I could never to my satisfaction go rightly about this duty of personal covenanting; I durst not promise, lest I fulfil not.

6*th Evil.* A secret love to the old husband the law; for, with the Jews, I am "seeking to establish My own righteousness;" doing duties, and resolving to be strict, for this end, to get glory from my conscience to myself, and that I might thereby appear the more glorious unto others. And I would be content to have my works here be a sharer in my room in heaven, and to be a part of my joy, and to have my happiness come that way; so that what was falsely attributed to David, 1 Sam. xvii. 28, by his brother Eliab, that out of the pride of his heart he had come to the battle; so it is with me in going against my lusts and tentations, it hath been to gain honour thereby, that I have undertaken it. And when God hath put down this idol of self-righteousness, and by permitting me to fall, hath crost the sitting up of this Dagon, I have marked I have mourned more that my resolutions have been broken, and my design broken and thwarted, than for any dishonour or grief done to God; so that, though I see an unsufficiency in my duties, and so cannot trust in them to save me, but forced to take another course, yet do I love these duties, and so love them as I would by that way come to heaven. Whereby unspeakable prejudice hath come to me; for God hath set Himself continually against this evil and idol, in respect I have been seeking to glory and boast in it; and, therefore have I never been able to keep my resolutions, lest I should doat on this Babel. And because I have been seeking mine own glory thereby, rather than to honour Christ, I think it is duty on me therefore to consider the evil of this sin, the wildness thereof, and to mourn for it, and confess it, and labour, by setting before me the work of Christ, to prefer His grace and righteousness for gaining of glory, and to the honour of purchasing heaven by my works; that the song of praise may be only to the Lamb, and not unto us. Oh it is difficult to quit self-righteousness! it is a precious idol.

7th Evil. I find a want of the Spirit, of the power and demonstration of the Spirit, in praying, speaking, and exhorting; that whereby men are mainly convinced, and whereby men see more in the Lord's people than in others; whereby they are a terror and a wonder unto others, so as they stand in awe of them; that glory and majesty whereby respect and reverence is procured, that whereby Christ's sermons were differenced from those of the Scribes and Pharisees: "He spake as one having authority, and not as the Scribes;" that which Paul calls "the power and demonstration of the Spirit;" and which is mentioned, Micah iii. 8, "I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, to declare to the house of Jacob their sin," which I judge to be the beams of God's majesty and spirit of holiness breaking out and shining through His people, whereof they, their words and carriage, are in some measure partakers; which is mentioned, 2 Cor. iii. 18; 1 Pet. v. 1, "partakers of the glory," which now and then the Lord in some measure *reveals*, transfiguring them before the world, but shall one day be manifested in such a manner and measure as the saints know not what they shall be, when Christ shall be admired in them. But my foul garments are on; and, alas! I am "lying among the pots." Woe is me! the crown of glory and majesty is fallen off my head; and my words are weak and carnal, and not mighty, whereby contempt is bred. No remedy for this but humility, self-loathing, and a studying to maintain fellowship with God, for this made Moses' face to shine—to walk circumspectly, for a "man's wisdom maketh his face to shine," and to express holiness, and glorify God, and then the Lord will honour thee.

8*th Evil.* I find not direct, plain, and particular returns of my prayers, though I find indirect and material returns, whereby I have been made to see and conclude that "it hath been good for me to draw near to God;" nor can I look on my returns as the returns of my prayer. Not observing of returns I find to have great influence on this.

9*th Evil.* Want of blessing on my labours to others, especially the unconverted; though I know and find that saints have gotten good, and others put in some good moods. But I fear I have drawn none from Satan to God; I take but little pains in this.

10*th Evil.* I cannot get the lesson of patient waiting and depending on God until the end of a trial learned; but ordinarily, after I am set and engaged to wait, I misbelieve and turn impatient, and my heart goes astray and turns careless; and then possibly when this thread is broken, I set myself to duties: and then the Lord's visiting of my spirit with new influences, is like Samuel's coming to Saul after he had sacrificed; so as I cannot say the Lord's return hath been the fruit of my waiting. So as I think I never knew what it is to abide in a patient depending, waiting on God in a night of absence till the morning, but unhappily give over my dependence, and interrupt my waiting by my carelessness, and taking comfort from some creature; which, though it proceed not from a deliberate wilfulness, as his, 2 Kings vi. 33, yet it is true I am stollen to do that really which he did advisedly: so that as yet I have not learned that uninterrupted waiting. So that when the Lord visits my soul with refreshful thoughts of my privileges, and puts it in health, yet very much of my comfort is impaired through the remembrance of my uneven carriage during the want of it; whereby I am moved to think, that it is not leal-come, but accidentally and not in love, when not helped to wait on the Lord for it. It hath once comforted me to think, that though the mercy hath not come as a fruit of either my waiting or prayers, yet hath it come as a fruit of Christ's prayers, and merits, and sufferings, and this hath satisfied me.

11*th Evil.* I cannot win to apply particular mercies fully and clearly, so as to have a persuasion of such a mercy I am seeking for; though I win to some application of general promises, such as these, "Christ came to save sinners;" "God sent not His son to condemn the world;" "Christ came to seek and save that which was lost;" which quiet my spirit. So that when I am reading of particular promises for removing of such and such straits, and for giving such and such blessings, they do not comfort me more than in their general nature they show God's goodness; and, therefore, I find not strength in them to plead for such a particular mercy, nor to persuade my mind of it that I shall obtain it, only they in the general quiet me. And hence I am not distrustful of my salvation, or of my happiness in the general; but whether I shall get such a particular mercy, or be delivered from such an evil. All the promises of deliverance do not breed in me an assurance or persuasion of it; so as, though God hath granted me many particular mercies, especially in temporals, which I have prayed for yet of none of them was I assured, though I have been made to hope before the granting and fulfilling of it; though some say, A faith of dependence is only requisite in such cases. But, besides the contrary experience of the saints, and the rendering void all particular promises, I have much to say against this. Oh to know what this means, which is in John: "We know that if we ask according to His will, He heareth us," and granteth our desires; and "this confidence we have of Him."

12*th Evil.* I cannot win above the fears of men, so as to break out in open defiance and arms against the world; but am kept in strong chains of fear and bashfulness to displease them, so as I cannot boldly reprove, exhort, or be free with many whom yet I know or strongly suspect to be in a sad condition, especially if they be great ones. And when at any time I win to do anything of this, it is with a great deal of reluctance, nay, greater than to lay my head down on the block; and I strike so sparingly when I lift my rod, that I scarce touch them, which comes from my complying and soft easy nature; insomuch that my neglects of such duties have been matter of my greatest exercises, and I think I fear not so much their prejudice or outward loss, as the thing itself is grievous, and displeasing of men, and to be thought ill of them.

13*th Evil.* I can never win to a watchful, self-diffident, and fearing frame, when at any time enlarged; but, notwithstanding of my multiplied falls, I will, when in any good frame, or gotten up again, with Peter, be persuaded that I will never be so as before, but will confidently promise to do this or that, and will not believe that any tentation will break this resolution; which confidence is not founded on the Lord, but comes from a presumptuous conceit and trust I have in myself. In a word, I cannot win to disbelieve my own heart, nor be so-persuaded of its weakness and deceitfulness. It is true, in great matters I am diffident of myself, but in small matters and resolutions I go about them continually in my own strength, and ever come short of them.

14*th Evil.* I can never win to carry rightly in public occasions, but am ever the worse of them; I meet with little of God, and see so little of Him, and get so little grace exercised, and am so carnal while doing any little civil business even to which I have a call, that, prepare my heart as I will ere I go out, and watch never so carefully, I find my whole man poisoned, and myself worse, and I come home with a world of challenges, so that company and civil business are a terror to me, and travail, a going to hell itself. I never know what to do when out of my chamber; I have not yet known what it is to traffic christianly in the world, but have been carnal in my ends and carriage, forgotten God, drowned in worldly matters. Oh when shall I be spiritual in carnal actions; in eating, drinking, bargaining, doing all as God's work! And when shall I get and do good in public occasions!

15*th Evil.* The promises and the Gospel, with Scripture-consolations, make me trust, believe, and hope, and quiet me in all my afflictions; yet do not so abundantly satisfy me, as to make me "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory," and as to lose sense of any other thing.

16*th Evil.* I can never win to keep my resolutions, so as in my practice to walk perfectly with God, so as to walk in peace; but every day I have challenges, not for sins of mere infirmity, but for such sins as might be helped, and which by mere unwatchfulness I fall into; such as to continue long departing from God, entertaining vain thoughts, vain idle words, mispending of time, excess in lawful comforts, slothing of private duties, doing things rashly, and such like, which are not wholly voluntary, or yet wholly of mere infirmity. Oh to sin but of mere infirmity! To walk thus perfectly with God I cannot, but there hath ever been a breach. By what I can learn, I never kept my vows even when the matter was possible.

17*th Evil.* Continual great unwillingness and indispositions to duties of all kinds, driving ever like Pharaoh's chariots (though, when once engaged in the duty, I find more delight and sweetness ordinarily in them than from the world), so as there is unwillingness to go to them, pain in them, and gladness when they are done; but especially in the engaging. Oh the power, wicked power in me, resisting God, and drawing back from him!

18*th Evil.* That I do not grow or go forward generally in the ways of God, nor yet get a particular work and exercise thoroughed; I think I am like "the door that turneth itself on the hinges." I make a motion in prayer, resolving and professing; but I am still where I was: I find the same ignorance, the same deadness, the same indispositions, the same unprofitableness, the same unbelief, the same power of sin as before; I fight, I wrestle, but do not overcome. I am exercised with troubles and other providences, but I see not what comes of them, they go away like knotless threads; and there is no end of my labour.

19*th Evil.* That I get so little light, comfort, or strength from public ordinances, pray, watch, prepare as I will; I mean sacraments, meetings, sermons. I find not nor see the power and glory of God, so as to draw near to him; I meet not with God in them. I find not sin mortified nor subdued, nor grace increased; and seldom is my heart bettered, but I find a constantly dead, lifeless, indisposed heart, and no sensible alteration in the time; and any sensible good I get is in private, though I find a real insensible good in public ordinances

20*th Evil.* Above all, I find a great unwillingness to teach, exhort, and do good to others, or to glorify God publicly; I cannot delight in this, nor go about this in faith of a blessing, nor with success, nor earnestly; but there is with me much constrained work, many occasions slighted of going about it, and the heart itself dead and heartless, and untouched with the glory of God, or the good of the person, especially if unconverted.

21*st Evil.* I find not a power persuading me of any truth. I have only a weak opinion and love to it, but I find not God with a mighty power revealing and persuading of truth; yea, there hath been much of nature in particular truths, though as to my general change and illumination there hath been a sensible almighty power; therefore am I still weak in my belief and practice. I have other evils, but these I find the strongest, and that stick closest and continue longest; I fight against and mourn under these, but they continue still in their strength.

SECTION III.

Declaring my present exercises, lessons I am learning, studying, and in which I have made some proficiency.

My life is a mystery to me; what I purpose and intend, that do I not. Though I have been little exercised, and as little advanced in these fore-mentioned exercises, yet hath the Lord been exercising me with some things which I intended, beyond my design; as:

1. I have been called to exercise the life of faith, to walk by it and not by sight; in which, by the Lord's revelation of the Gospel, and from some consideration on 2 Cor. v. 7, I have been exercised, especially through tentations, which seek to make me misbelieve, and do discourage me.

2. The Lord hath been learning me, and I have been exercised in the grace of submission to the Lord's will in crossing mine; and I win to write a hearty amen thereunto, and to say, "Good is His will," let it be done, and not mine.

3. I have learned and someway exercised patience, which is a continued submission and quiet obedience, and the constancy of the spirit, in not being shaken, or moved, or diverted with evil; and I have this lesson continually in my head, and therein have made some progress.

4. I am learning to read love in the greatest of evils, sin, desertions, afflictions, plagues of heart and disappointments; and to put good constructions on all God's dealings; and when anything comes, though ever so cross, I first inquire, What love can I see in this?

5. I am casting out and have cast out the bond-woman and her child out of my soul, I mean the slavish spirit of fear, and the proud self-acting spirit, beating in daily evan-

gelical principles in my head, so as now I find more faith and love in my actings.

6. I am drawing my heart to love the Lord Jesus, and to close with Him with my whole heart, and to be content to live with Him alone, shunning departing from Him, and striving to beget and entertain familiar and kind thoughts of God in Christ, and to root out of my heart my strange and hard thoughts of Him and of Christ.

7. I am making the world a stranger to me, daily meditating of such considerations as may mortify my heart thereunto, God furthering this enmity by providences, whereby I find the world my constant enemy, and am thereby made to hate and despise it, and to be carried with indignation against it.

8. I am studying sobriety in my affections, actings, and carriage, in seeking after moderation, in not being much moved with any occurrence, studying always to be kept within bounds, and to be my own master.

9. I am taken up with observing of providences, especially in reference to myself, to see what God's ends may be in them, why they are sent, and what is suitable duty; but, above all to see God in them, in His wisdom, holiness, and love.

10. I am endeavouring to be profitable to others, and what my generation work is, and studying the right way of going about it.

11. I am helped to study and exercise thankfulness, the greatest help whereunto is the consideration that all favours are from God, and so many pledges of heaven, and bought with the blood of Christ.

12. I am studying to know the glory of heaven, to be drawing all my consolations from this, and to be making it my treasure.

13. I am studying to make Christ my all, even "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," and, in the want of all, to live in, and on, and from Himself alone. These have been my exercises this while bygone, though beyond my intention.

Lastly, I learn dependence on God in outward straits, to recommend all things to Him, to believe on Him, for deliverance, to be comforting myself from Him, waiting for an outgate, and to be observing His hand in supporting under and delivering from manifold troubles; and to be from these experiences increasing in love and faith. And, indeed, I have found manifold experiences of late of outward deliverances, so that my life hath been a continual coming in and out of troubles, and every trouble seemed a remediless one till God freed me out of it.

SECTION IV.

Declaring my growth in grace as to some particulars.

Comparing my present condition with times past, notwithstanding of my complaints of unfruitfulness, yet I find these sensible growths in me:

1. I am helped to improve time, opportunities, and occasions of doing and getting good better than formerly; so that these occasions that were spent in vain-talking, sloth, ease, and needless recreations, are now better improven to the glory of God, edifying of myself and others; and these occasions are likewise more prized.

2. I find more sobriety and temperance as to meat, drink, recreations, and company, and greater strength against and hatred to sin, and a more violent resisting of it.

3. I find I have much increased, not only in a notional knowledge, but in an experimental knowledge of some necessary points, which have had a powerful and blessed influence on my heart and conversation. I know more of God's nature and of Christ stamped on my heart, the covenant of grace and faith, patience, duty, and the nature of sanctification, the deceits of Satan, and wildness of my own heart, and my mistakes anent truths.

4. More diligence than formerly in prayer, meditation,

and reading of the Scripture, more hearty and frequent in them; as likewise, making more conscience of doing good to others, and pitying them more. Much in extraordinary duties.

5. Faith discovered to act more vigorously than formerly, even against oppositions, being more purely grounded on the word in opposition to sense; the grounds more strong than formerly, giving greater ease, and security, and strength, and joy, than before; as likewise, more constantly and more strengthened to duties, and against objections and discouragements, insomuch that these doubts, which before would have dung [driven] me off my feet, I am now helped through grace to withstand; nay, to believe more strongly, so as there is no objection but I can say something to it.

6. I find more love to the Lord Jesus than formerly, a greater estimation of Him, greater mourning for His absence, desiring and longing after Him with more ardent desires, and a greater love and loveliness discovered in Him than before.

7. Patience more in exercise than before.

8. More sober, grave, watchful, circumspect, and spiritual in my conversation, which before was light, carnal, and unprofitable, as it is in part yet.

9. More familiar knowledge of, and acquaintance with, God in Christ. Better acquaint with, and more kindly uptakings of Him, and more love seen in His person and providences than before.

10. Sorer exercised with inward and outward trials than formerly, gathering from the proportion of my burdens, hardness of my lessons, and difficulty in the work, the increase of strength and wisdom.

11. Audience of prayer made out more distinctly than formerly.

12. I find my enmity to, contempt and fear of, the world increased.

13. More strength, wisdom, and success in going about

civil business; and of late the Lord's hand turned upon me in taking off my burdens.

14. Under more serious aud deeper apprehensions of the great things of the law, of sin, hell, heaven, eternity, than formerly; more wakened than serious.

15. I have left off several sins which before I was subject unto, as drinking of healths, playing at cards, haunting without conscience ungodly company, gluttony, vain frothy discourse, lightness, jesting, and neglect of duties.

16. I find a sensible mortification of pride, being more vile in mine own eyes, less seeking the applause of others in duties or words, more submissive to cross dispensations, less contending and striving with others, but bearing infirmities, and covering them, and more prizing of and thankfulness for meaner and small mercies.

17. More spiritual and evangelical in working than formerly, doing things now out of respect to His command, relying more on His strength, more confidence of being accepted, and more thankfulness for acceptance.

18. I am helped to see and observe more of God and His ways than formerly, and to gather more instruction therefrom.

19. And, as I think, my gifts are increased, at least as to speaking. Notwithstanding of late I find a decay in some things, especially in diligence, tenderness, and usefulness to others, being more worldly, and my wants and imperfections are so great even in these same particulars, that I daily mourn, fear, abhor, and humble myself under them; nay, my wants are so great, my spots so foul, my sins so many, as oftentimes with fear and sorrow of heart I say, Hath God ever loved me with the love of His chosen? doth the Spirit of Christ indeed dwell in me? shall I indeed go to heaven? and will Christ say, "Well done, good and faithful servant?"

SECTION V.

Declaring the objective Grounds of my doubting my conversion and actual interest in Christ, with the special and general answers thereto.

Since the time I knew anything of God until this day, the tempter has not ceased to make me continually raze the foundations. And I find that it has been his first and greatest drift to make me doubt of my conversion, by proponing of false marks, and making me to imagine grace to be another thing than indeed it was; and by inconsiderate reading of marks of sanctification given in good books, some of which I found afterwards not well cautioned, and by a confident asserting I was not converted. So that, for the space of three years after my real conversion, I not only doubted of my conversion, but believed that I was all the time rather in an unconverted state, but thought I was in the way, and had good hopes. But the Lord making the fruits of sanctification to appear, I began to think otherwise, and in process of time to think rather I was converted, and to settle that as a conclusion, which, though the devil cannot totally overturn, yet ceases he not to shake it, which by search I found out to be summed up in these twenty branches.

1*st Ground.* Because there was not such a distinct, long, orderly, and deep work of preparation and humiliation at first conversion as I found described in practical books writing of the new birth. *Answer*, There was a work of the Almighty power of Chirst discovering sin and a natural condition as the greatest evils, which put me out to restless endeavours to come out of this; and I found the inability of myself and all duties to bring me out of this condition. And the Lord did by a marvellous light discover the Lord Jesus to me as the Saviour of sinners and their full happiness; and my heart immediately closed with Him wholly and fully, which in its fruits hath continued to this day. 2*do*, That though the substantials of conversion be observed generally amongst all, yet do not all persons' cases agree as to the circumstantials of conversion, that is, as to the length, measure, and manner of the spirit of bondage, as is likewise clear from Scripture. 3*tio*, The question is not so much how Christ came in, as if He be in. If ye find the fruits of holiness, it is well, though ye know not how they were sown or grown; "The kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation."

2nd Ground. My ordinary, uneven, unsettled, unprofitable, way of walking with the Lord, the ordinary strayings and departings of my heart from God; which unstableness in all my ways makes me fear double-mindedness, and to question whether my heart did ever find and see the exceeding evil of sin, seeing I so easily fall into it; and how this can consist with the love of God that ought to be in the heart. *Answer*, Though I cannot deny these sins as to the matter, yet these considerations are suggested unto me as answer thereunto: (1) They are not the spots of the world, 2 Pet. ii. 20, they are as to their nature like the "spots of His children," they are unwatchfulness, shortcomings as to the heights of duty, idle words, fits of unbelief carnality in the use of lawful comforts. (2) I bless God they are not the sins of the time; I have been through grace kept from bowing of the knee to Baal. If I die in this wilderness, it is for my own sin, and not that I have any part in the general conspiracy. (3) I find they interrupt not the Lord's kindness utterly, but find that in my worst His "visitations uphold my spirit." (4) Though the bush be burning, yet it is not consumed; the spark of spiritual life that the Lord hath kindled remains still burning, yea and increasing, for all these showers of sin that seek to quench it. (5) Though I have departed, yet not wickedly from God. I sin neither deliberately, delightfully, with full consent nor lie impenitently in my sins; I grieve and mourn for them, and hate them. (6) I find sin on the decaying hand. (7) I find advantages by my sins, "Peccare nocet, peccavisse vero juvat." I may say, as Mr Fox, my sins have in a manner done me more good than my graces. Grace and mercy "hath abounded where sin hath abounded." I am made more humble, watchful, revengeful against myself, to see a greater need to depend more upon Him, to love Him the more that continues such kindness to me notwithstanding of my manifold provocations. I find that true which Shepherd saith, "Sin loses strength by every new fall."

3rd Ground. My fearful, dark, hellish ignorance, and carnal conceptions of God, heaven, and hell, by which I am tempted to draw this conclusion, that I am yet in darkness, and that that marvellous light which discovereth Christ really as He is, the glory of the Father, hath not shined on my soul; but that all my knowledge is either rational, or notional, or natural. Oh my unspeakable ignorance of Him! To which, for satisfaction, I answer these things: (1) That no man hath seen God face to face, but in His back parts, which is a very imperfect knowledge, Exod. xxxiii. 23; this was it that Moses saw. (3) Saints "see but through a glass," not immediately in this life, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. (3) And hence they see but darkly, as in a mystery, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. (4) The most eminent saints have much lamented their ignorance of God, Prov. xxx. 2, "I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of the holy." O how little a portion of Him is known! (5) This is a time of absence, and it is but a dark knowledge we have of one not present; it is in heaven we will "see face to face, and know as we are known, and see Christ as He is," 1 John iii. 3. (6) "We walk by faith, and not by sight," 2 Cor. v. 7. Seeing is our life in heaven not here. It is a controversy whether the sight we have here of Christ be specifically different from what they have in heaven. (7) It is considerable, Job xlii. 5, that when Job saw the Lord extraordinarily, he thought his former knowledge but a knowing God by the hearing of the ear; and yet, when Job knew but by the hearing of the ear, and not by the seeing of the eye, he was then a "just man, that feared God, and eschewed evil." (8) I saw the Lord in glory with the eyes of my mind once extraordinarily, and as I thought intuitively, the impression and effects of which remain to this day. (9) I have and find the real effects of saving knowledge. I trust in Him, "They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee," Psalm ix. 10. It makes me prize and esteem Him, and long for Him above all things, and mourn for His absence as the greatest evil, John iv. 10, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that asketh water of thee, thou wouldest ask." Though the thing be not seen in its cause, yet it is seen in its effects. (10) Folk may really see and know God, though they neither mind it nor know it, yea, though they think they do not so, John xiv. 9, Philip desired to see the Father, as though He had never been revealed to him; and yet Christ tells him he saw Him, because he saw Christ. (11) The Lord saith, "To execute judgement is to know the Lord." Our knowledge of God is better discovered in our obedience to Him than in our uptakings of Him. (12) As "herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us;" so herein is knowledge, not that we know Him, but rather, as the Apostle saith, Gal. iv. 9, "are known of Him." What shall I say, *lastly* but as Mr Shepherd on the subject, "If ever the Lord hath revealed Christ to thee, thou wilt go mourning to the grave for want of Him, and for thy ignorance of Him so long?" The Lord knows that it is the thing in the world I have most desired, to know God and to see His glory.

4th Ground. That seldom hath there been a glorious clear, distinct, and full covenanting with God. Something I remember of the Lord's wooing of me; and how can the Lord be mine unless some marriage-day hath been? And whenever I have gone about this duty, how much heartlessness and confusion? In trouble I have been, but not a distinct delivery. This objection is of the same nature with the first, and therefore I answer (1), When the Lord first made me see a need of Himself, and my misery in the want of Him, and had wearied me of myself, I remember then He discovered the Lord Jesus in His loveliness, and my soul, even my whole soul, was made fully and for evermore to close with Him, and Him only, and above all, and for all things. And as this was the upshot of my tossings, so was it the seed of all good that ever followed, and I was made to express this much. (2) As, in the preparatory work of humiliation, the Lord observes not the same method with all, so, in the soul's closing with Christ, all do it not under the same distinct notion. Some do it explicitly, and expressly subscribe with heart and hand that they are the Lord's and swear fealty to Him; some close with Christ implicitly and really, their heart clinging to Him and His ways, though they be not distinct and express in this; yea, some close with Christ, and are married to Him by and under the notion of believing on Him with all their heart for all things, and so cast themselves on Christ; and this is covenanting, as covenanting is believing. And, therefore, is faith expressed under several notions and terms, according to the variety of men's apprehensions of it, and the several exercises of the soul in going out after and closing with Christ. Believing on Christ, and the will's liking of Christ, and personal covenanting with Christ, are all one upon the matter, viz., the soul's union with Christ; the Lord is thine, however, and thou art His. It is both a private and public solemn marriage; if once thou know anything of it, look not for solemn marriages every day. Hardly is the renewal of a covenant, which is frequent, so glorious and signal as the first marriage-day.

5*th Ground* is, Not only the dim apprehensions, but the unkindly uptakings and conceivings of the Lord in Christ, as a strange God, and not under the kindly relation of a father, and friend, and husband, which breeds aversion to Him, so as I cannot trust on Him with my whole heart. And this makes me fear I am but under the relation of a servant, wanting the Spirit of adoption, and that I am yet but a stranger, and not drawn near to Him in Christ, not a son. To which I answer these things: (1) That, however, in the beginning there was ground for this complaint, yet that now there is no such cause, because that by serious meditation on Christ, on His offices, on His carriage towards sinners, and on His works of providence towards myself, both as to my spiritual and temporal condition, I have been helped to see the Lord, and uptake Him under the kindly notion of a Father, yea, of my best and nearest friend, of my life, hope, health, and light, so as "I am a stranger on earth" with God. (2) That howbeit many are sons indeed, and "have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear," yet do they take to themselves this spirit again; and the Lord suffers this, that even His children be as servants, especially in the beginning, though they be lords of all; and that the bond-woman with her son be continued with the heir of the promise, Gal. iv. 1, 2, 24. (3) That as no sin is perfectly healed in this life, so neither is the legal spirit of fear perfectly cast out; but when love is perfect it will cast out fear, 1 John iv. 18, and is daily casting it out. (4) That as it is in children who know not distinctly their parents, but as strangers are afraid of them, yet have a secret instinct of nature, their heart warms, and cannot be kept away from them; so I have found with myself, when most under bondage and hardest apprehensions of God, that yet some kind of correspondence hath been kept up, and that I have mourned for His absence as under the greatest evil, could not be kept from Him, was intimate and homely, though I had not such boldness and confidence to be heard.

6th Ground. Because I am tempted to think I have not been visited with special love, or the favour the Lord shows to His people; and that all my enlargements, visitations, light, change of heart, are but common mercies, no extraordinary thing. And what can I build on them? I answer (1), That though at first there appear little more than common mercies in them, yet have I by a more narrow search found some special love and favour engraven upon them, as I purpose to show hereafter. (2) What we meet with now are but the earnest of the bargain, and that is little in respect of the bargain itself; and it matters not whether the earnest be little or much, 2 Cor. v. 7. (3) We should judge of the Lord's love rather by His sanctifying influences, humbling and strengthening the heart, than by His ravishing enjoyments and consolations. : We see the dreadful end of such as boast much of that; it is the "adulterous generation" that "seeketh after" such "signs." (4) The way and manner of conveyance of mercies and spiritual visitations are rather to be looked to than themselves. See if ye have them by prayer, if ye have them of free grace, if they represent, hold out, and draw to God, and the Lord be stamped on them; not the gift but the giver: This day of small things is not to be dispised. (5) The people of God are a poor and needy people, kept empty, have all their fulness in Christ, in the promise; and is to be revealed in Heaven, where their treasure is. (6) This is an evil time, a time of famine and beggary, in which it is good to be preserved from starving, and in which a little is worth twice as much as at another time.

7th Ground. That the mercies received come not in a gracious way, not as the answer of prayers, or as the result of my patient waiting, but as it were by chance, my mercies, oft-times trysting with my worst frame. To which I answer (1), I have prayed, mourned, waited, and hoped for mercies, though with much weakness and imperfection. It is not the degree but the nature that is to be looked to. (2) They are not the fruits of my prayers and endeavours; for there is more ground of loathing me for these than rewarding me. But they are come in a better and more comfortable way, viz., by grace. The Lord trysts mercies with our indispositions, that grace may be seen. It is rather a sign of love than hatred, that grace is stamped on all favours and enjoyments: "Not unto us, but unto Thy name." It is better to hold mercies by this title. It is not fit that the Lord's love should be proportioned to our endeavours; where were grace then? "Not of works, lest any man should boast." (3) They draw to God.

8th Ground. The Lord carrying as a stranger and an enemy to me, crossing me in all my ways, not giving me my will, so that it would seem He were not my father. To this I answer these things: (1) That He causes grief, and shows wrath, yet not pure wrath; He "takes not His loving-kindnesses utterly away," but they are "renewed every morning." He shows much kindness in the midst of all His judgments. (2) Our will, like children, is not our well; and it is a mercy to be crossed in this. God knows what is best for us. (3) This is a time of wrath, a night; and what wonder if storms and darkness be? (4) Ye see, saints have complained of this: "Why art thou unto me as an emeny?" Job saith, "Thou art cruel unto me." (5) Sense represents God falsely; it is to sense and fancy that God thus appears, not to faith. We should take other interpreters than sense. (6) We should not look upon all things that may be trials as effects of wrath: "God hideth man from His purpose," that He may hide pride, that the soul may be patient and humble, and exercise faith. (7) It is utterly wrong that anything without us should make us doubt our inward sincerity, seeing these are extrinsic to it: "No man knoweth love or hatred by anything under the sun."

9th Ground. That prayers are not directly and plainly answered. To this I answer (1), As in the former, that it is a thing without us, and so extrinsic to our sincerity. In this matter, regard is to be had rather to the manner of our prayers than to our answers. (2) There is no fear, if ye pray in the name of Christ, in faith, in humility, and sincerity, though they should not be answered. (3) I have ever been helped in my extremity, in the deep, Psal. cxxx. 1. (4) It is an ordinary complaint of saints, Psal. xxii. 1, 2; Lam. iii. 8, "He shutteth out my prayer." (5) Prayers may be suspended when they are not rejected, Luke xviii. 4, 7. (6) There is no fear while ye continue in well doing; for "in due time ye shall reap, if ye faint not." Where God hath given a mouth and stomach, He will give meat. Your cause is in dependence, not overthrown; and it is good that ye get what will bear your expenses till a decision be given. (7) I find myself better and worse as I increase or decay in prayer; a token they are not altogether in vain. (8) Prayers may be heard, and ye not know it, Hos. xi. 3. (9) The answer of prayers is not ordinarily direct and plain in the terms of our petition, but indirect; ye have not the same thing ye seek, but ye are answered equivalently in as good. (10) I get promises renewed. (11) It is like, when the Lord will build up Zion, there will be many answers dispatched. Now is a sowing time; hereafter is our harvest, and then all petitions shall be answered. (12) After search, I found some petitions directly answered; and it is want of taking up and considering our returns, or our own sloth, that hinders us from discerning our returns. Sometimes the Lord hears, and we are so prejudiced that we will not believe it, as in Job's case.

10*th Ground.* Want of compassion to, and deep apprehension of, the lamentable soul's case of my unconverted relations and ignorant, profane, formal neighbours: Oh it lies not heavy on my spirit! Do I believe therefore a hell or heaven, or that the ignorant or unconverted shall go to hell? I answer (1), By confessing that there is great want of compassion, and faith, and seriousness in this, and that there is great deadness—Lord help it; for we believe, love, and prophesy but in part only. (2) I mourn for this, and this deadness is loathsome and hateful to me. (3) I am yet helped, upon occasional views of their condition, to have my sorrow stirred, and to be earnest for them with the Lord, yea, and to pour forth tears and sighs of grief for them, and to find my compassion sensibly stirred.

11*th Ground* is a constant indisposition of spirit to all manner of duties, unwillingness to enter to them, wearied and heartless in them, and glad when they are done; so that I fear there is not a new nature which delights in the Law of God. To which I answer these things: (1) That as there is a regenerate and unregenerate part in every believer, which is continually opposite to that which is good; so this indisposition doth proceed from the unregenerate part in which no good thing dwelleth, Rom. vii. 8; and this should make us question our state no more than the being of a body of death. (2) That I find something in me that mourns under this, which esteems, approves, and sees a glory and delight in the Law of the Lord, Rom. vii. 22. "The Spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." (3) That therefore I am not so much wearied of the duty (which I love), but of my own ill heart in the duty: As a loving son, that hath a pained foot, is willing to run his father's errand, and glad to be employed, and yet the sore foot makes the journey a burden; there is a thorn in the flesh. An unsound heart's opposition is to the duty itself; hypocrites love not all duties.

12*th Ground.* Because I found not a full resolution to obey some difficult commands, such as plain and free reproof, especially of great folk; plain dealing with my acquaintances as to their state: Which makes me think I am not universal as to my obedience; and that I am but partial in my obedience. To this I answer these things: (1) That though I exceedingly fail in the manner as being heartless, general, and having base ends, not altogether respecting the good of the party I deal with; yet, through grace, I win to do the duty as to the matter and substance of it. (2) That when I do it, I find I do it not only to ease my conscience, but out of respect to the command of God. (3) That I prize, love, esteem, and have respect to this duty, and my heart would be at it; and am straitened and in pain till I discharge it. I approve that "the Law is holy." (4) I pray, mourn, and loathe myself under my failings in this, and have fetched it to Christ; and it is strange to me that that sin, for which I groan to the Lord Jesus to be delivered from it, should or can damn me. It is the Lord's controversy: "Wilt thou not be made clean?" (5) It is through accident that those duties are omitted, through my natural bashful temper. A man would do a thing willingly, but is in bonds that he cannot get it done; I find that "when I would do good, evil is present." (6) There is not a full conviction of the duty, but especially of the way and manner how it should be performed: "How to do I know not."

13*th Ground.* That I am not so taken up in heart with heaven, in longing after it, delighting and rejoicing in the expectations thereof; and, therefore, my heart not being there, it is likely it is not my treasure. To which I answer (1), Look, as when Philip said to Christ, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us;" Christ answers, "You have known Him, because he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." So I say: He that desires and mourns after Christ mourns for sin, and desires to be holy, loves the fellowship of God's people, doth really love and long for heaven; for what is heaven but the enjoyment of Christ and conformity to Him; though in a more clear and distinct notion? (2) My unwillingness to go to heaven doth proceed from a desire to do some service for Christ ere I went: Much of my work I suspect is yet undone. (3) This proceeded from a want of a full assurance of my future happiness and some fears; for I love the thing. (4) I find myself of late more distinct and clear in my longings after, and joyful expectations of heaven, and my heart more heavenly-minded.

14*th Ground.* That I grow not, nor come not speed; nor am I throughing [advancing in] my work, but ever after one manner. I answer (1), That though there may be growth in grace, yet it appears not always sensibly, but grows as a seed of corn, and a man knows not; it "comes not with observation." (2) Notwithstanding of remaining evils, yet do I find a remarkable growth, though not in the bulk of graces, yet as to the nature and purity; I have made better work, though not so much of it; I work more evangelically than I did before, with purer ends; I grow downward if not upward. (3) I have found a growth in faith, in love, in patience, in humility; dying to the world and myself and self-righteousness, and living unto God: Though in that which I propose to myself there is no growth. Yea (4), There is an expediency, if not a necessity, of pulling down a certain kind of righteousness; and hence a man shall find himself worse than before, ere ever the righteousness of God be set up.

15*th Ground.* Because I find such an evil heart in me, such blindness, hardness of heart, carnality, pride, and other sins, and in such an high degree, that I say, "Did ever the Lord renew this heart? I answer (1), "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing; and as to my unrenewed part, I am "carnal, and sold under sin." There is a "body of death" in all. (2) As I find this in my flesh, so do I find a new man, that knows, delights in the Lord and His ways, and continually hates and opposes the body of death.

16*th Ground.* That I enjoy not this Lord Himself in ordinances, in public or private prayer, in hearing of the Word, or reading thereof, or through meditation; There is not that special fellowship with the Lord Himself, nor the glory or power of Christ found and seen; some light and strength, but little or none of God. To this I answer (1), That I really desire and love the Lord Christ above anything, and mourn for want of Him, and come to ordinances for Himself, and am unsatisfied with anything, though never so glorious, if it fetch not nor reveal a Christ to me: Yea, I love everything for His cause mostly; and it makes every mercy sweet to me, that it comes from the Lord. (2) Although through mine own sloth and unbelief, and because of an evil time and day of wrath there are not such plain and full visions of God; yet have I found ordinances, and duties, and works of Providence, reveal something of the Lord Himself, and of His love and greatness, so as my soul hath been drawn to the Lord Himself thereby, and to love, and admire, and adore, and delight in Him the more. (3) I have found the ordinances and means (though not sensibly nor presently, yet) in process of time bringing forth real fruits of holiness, so as I had reason to bless the Lord for such occasions; even as my body is really (though not sensibly) nourished by meat and drink. However, this point deserves a more serious consideration.

17*th Ground.* That my thoughts of sin, of hell, and of heaven, do not beget such lively impressions upon my soul. I tremble not at sin, death, and hell; I am not rejoicing in hope of glory; and this makes me think my knowledge and faith is but dead and lifeless. To this I answer (1), That though in my sensitive faculty I find not these impressions of joy and fear, yet do I find them in my estimative, appreciative faculty; so as I really judge sin to be the greatest evil, and am really most troubled with it; and I judge Christ, His grace and holiness, to be really the greatest good. A man is more pained, tormented, troubled, and cries out more for a boil on his finger than he doth when he knoweth he hath a hectic fever or consumption; and yet he truly judges the one a greater evil than the other. There is more fear than grief in the damned for sin than in any saint; and a soul newly converted and drawn to the ways of God, with assurance of Christ's love, hath more sensible joy than a grown, assured Christian. Grace goes not by the sensible impressions on the affections, or rising of the sensitive faculty or appetite, which outward and sensible objects do elevate. (2) Saints have found and lamented this distemper, as it is such, and yet have not quit their interest, Isa. lxiii. 17, "Why hast Thou hardened our hearts from Thy fear?" And hence David and the Church do cry frequently for quickening, "Quicken us, O Lord, and we will call on Thy name." (3) Baxter saith well, "Hardness of heart is more in the will and practice than in the sensitive faculty;" as is easy proven by Scripture. Disobedience is hardness of heart in Scripture.

18*th Ground* is from my spiritual pride, which streams itself through all my actions, even my most spiritual, and hence I find that I resolve to be holy, to get an esteem, not from men but from conscience; I mourn for sin as it is a weakness, and as it is contrary to my design and resolutions. Yea, though I find an insufficiency in duties to save me, and so of necessity made to flee to another, yet do I find my heart secretly wishing that it were otherwise, that life were to be had through our own works; and this makes me secretly desire and endeavour to do something on earth that might be a part of my crown in heaven: and I found a despising of the glory revealed in heaven, if freely given, and no way merited; so that I am by this put to question whether ever I was dead to the law or not. To which I answer, omitting what may be answered to this by what hath been said, I satisfy myself with this, That as I find a spirit of self and pride acting, so do I find a spirit of humility loathing myself for this my pride, and a secret contentedness in breaking my resolutions even when they were good, because self was thereby debased, and the counsel of the Lord did stand: Yea, and I find "I rejoice in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me;" and I love heaven the better, because it is the purchase of Christ's blood, and the fruit of free grace. *2dly*, "Self will be in every action (saith Shepherd); and this body of death will discover itself thus, as well as any other way."

19*th Ground*. I find such instability in my heart and ways, such unequal steps betwixt the Lord and my idols, that I fear my whole heart is not come to the Lord; I am not his only. Oh the one heart, the united heart, the conjugal heart! But, alas! mine is parted betwixt the Lord and idols; and I sometimes delight in the Lord, and sometimes in my idols and worldly contentment, 2 Kings xvii. 33, They served the Lord, and they served their idols. I answer: 1*st*, No man ever closed so fully with Christ, or had such a conjugal love, but had some inclinations to idols, by reason of the unregenerate part. Our union of faith and love is imperfect, as well as any other grace; the unregenerate carnal part cries still for, and would be at, its lovers. In heaven our affections shall be wholly for the Lord. *2dly*, The renewed part is for the Lord wholly and only, and gives not consent to what the flesh doth, but is led captive, and sighs under the bondage, and cries out against its own heart-whorishness; and the denomination is taken from the better part. "O miserable man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Unrenewed men contentedly and allowedly divide their affections, they loathe not nor abhor themselves. *3dly*, I find the Lord's interest growing stronger and stronger in my soul.

20*th Ground.* When I read that the "unprofitable servant is cast into utter darkness," and consider the great disproportion that is betwixt my service and my rule and the former practice of saints, I cannot conceive how I can go to heaven, how the just Lord will give heaven to such an unprofitable servant; will ever Christ say to me, "Well done, good and faithful servant?" But for this I answer these things: 1*st*, Heaven is not promised to the degree or measure of grace, but to the nature of it; the Lord accepts mites, cups of cold water, grains of mustard-seed; He will not quench smoking flax: I do service, though I cannot weigh it in measure. 2*dly*, Such is the condescendency and lovely nature of Christ, that He will crown those duties we are ashamed to own. Christ counts and prizes saints' duties more than anything else in the world: "Ye visited Me, fed Me, gave Me drink. When saw we Thee hungry or naked? In that ye did it to one of these little ones, ye did it to Me." It is Christ's gracious property, He is soon pleased, and His yoke is easy. Parents are wonderfully taken up with the poorest and simplest action or speeches of their children. There is a fatherly love in Christ. 3*dly*, Heaven comes by grace, by Christ's blood, and not by works; works are not your title to glory. "No law music," saith Rutherford, "in heaven; no, "worthy is the Lamb." Look not to what thou hast done, but to what Christ hath done; ye neither share in whole nor in part with Christ: good works are mentioned, not to buy or purchase glory by, but to evidence an interest in Christ and sincerity in grace; if there be as much as will evidence sincerity, there is enough. The least gold is gold as well as the greatest piece.

As for those general answers I promised, because these are included in the special answers given to the special objections; and in respect I am in the next section to go over some things relating to the same purpose, I shall not mention them.

SECTION VI.

Declaring my evidences of Regeneration and Heaven.

1st, A continued prizing and esteeming, and love of, and desire and mourning for, and longing after God in Christ above all things, above gifts, saints, duties, graces, and joys; and this wrought of new in my soul by an almighty power. "I love them that love Me;" 1 Peter ii. 7, "To you that believe Christ is precious."

2dly, Real and fervent love to the saints, yea, all saints, and because such; with a contempt and hatred of others. I prize, esteem, and delight in the fellowship of saints above what I have to my nearest relations; and by this I gather that I am translated "from death to life," and shall one day reign with them, 1 John iii 14.

3dly, I am in heart engaged to the Lord Jesus His service, accounting it most glorious; and am desiring and accounting it as my greatest mercy to be employed for Him, and mourned for my unprofitableness, and great loss Christ is at with me as the greatest evil, 1 John iii. 10; John xv. 14, and have been assisted to do so in some measure; and that my shortcomings have proceeded from ignorance and unbelief.

4thly, Because that when, through the violence of temptations and suggestions, my fears do arise, and I then go and stayedly and diligently examine myself according to the Scriptures, and submit it to their determination, I find my condition and case good, and am made to hope; and if the Word absolve, who can condemn? Psal. xcvi. 13; Isa. viii. 20; Rom. ii. 2, The judgment of God is according to truth.

5thly, Because, when, by the power of tentations and unbelief I conclude or apprehend I am unregenerate, I find much evil thereby, and these conclusions, like poison, utterly to wrong my soul, and my heart drawn from God, and utterly weakened to duty. Whereas, I concluding my state gracious, I find my heart enlarged, God's countenance shining upon me, hatred to sin, and strength to go about duty; which I look upon as the Lord's sealing these conclusions.

6*thly*, Because that the Lord, by His mighty power, answering all my objections clearly and fully, with much pains, hath made me believe on the Lord Jesus, and come to Him, not only for peace and comfort, but likewise mainly for Himself and for sanctification, for removal, not of some sins only, but of all sin; and, above all, for delivery from my wicked nature; esteeming real conformity to and enjoyment of God the greatest mercy, and a natural condition the sorest evil, by which I distinguish my faith from hypocrites, Hosea xiv. 2; Micah iii. 11.

7*thly*, Because my love, faith, patience, and obedience, have been tried by the winds and storms of temptations, especially inward; and yet, through the strength of Christ, my bow hath not broken, but He hath increased my strength; by which I am made to think I am built on the Rock, Luke vi. 48.

8*thly*, Because I have found the Lord, when He was drawing me to Himself, observe the same way which He uses to draw His own to Himself. For I have found that He hath discovered my undone condition by nature, my distance with and enmity to God, and my wildness; He hath affected me with this as the greatest evil; He hath discovered my inability to help myself, discovered to me my heart-pollutions, the insufficiency of duties; wearied and loaded me with my heart and ways, so as I utterly despaired of myself and ways, only hoping in the Lord secretly; and now, while undone, and acknowledging the Lord's righteousness, I have by many wonderful providences, great and continued pains, been made with much ado, and over the belly of all objections, to come to Christ, and to believe on Him for upmaking all my wants, especially the want of Himself;

and have received His promise upon this, which hath satisfied me, and given rest to my wearied soul; so that now I find His word my abiding security, and the Lord my light, strength, consolation, and glory. And being thus made by an omnipotent power to come to Himself by the warrant and on the authority of His Word, and that for all things, I do expect He will not cast me off, nor cast off the work of His hands; but, being called, will likewise be "justified and glorified," John vi. 37; Rom. viii. 30.

9*thly*, I find a real, inward, universal, and abiding change from darkness to light, from sin and Satan to God and His ways, wrought by a great power; and can remember how, and by what means, and when it was wrought, and how the Lord daily perfects it. By which change I am differenced from the rest of the world, and from what I was myself before conversion, and from all hyprocrites in the world; by which change, and that "all things are new," I gather I am in Christ, 2 Cor. v. 17; Eph. iv. 22, 23, 24.

10*thly*, Because, comparing myself, exercises of spirit, properties, and sins, with the saints in Scripture, I find them answer to one another as face doth to face; I find them complain of the same evils and distempers I complain of; and, in condemning myself, I must likewise condemn them, and so "offend the generation of the righteous." And when I pass hasty conclusions against myself, I next say, Is there any that hath grace? And so, being like them, and of them, I think I will share alike with them at last.

11*thly*, A sensible growth in humility, knowledge, sobriety, faith, patience, love to Christ, deadness to the world and repentance; whereas hypocrites fall away. And, therefore, think that the good work is begun, seeing the Lord is daily perfecting it, Philip. i. 6; and this shows it to be a fountain "springing up to everlasting life," seeing it is not dried up, John iv. 14.

12*thly*, An universal "respect to all commands," hatred to all sins; which is kythed in my loving every one of these commands, endeavouring to do every one of them, seeing a glory in every one of them, and mourning for all omissions, though through ignorance and infirmity I win not up to do them, Luke i. 6; Psal. cxix. 6.

13*thly*, I find, by diligent examination of myself according to the Scriptures, a clear difference betwixt all my graces and such as I have seen or read to be in hypocrites; and though I think I come behind all saints, yet find in me what is not in any hypocrite, Matth. v. 20, "Except your righteousness exceed," etc.

14*thly*, That my works, obedience, and exercise of grace, come continually through faith, and from Gospel principles, rather than from legal motives; and that the consideration of honouring Christ doth draw me more strongly to my duty than any other motive whatsomever of benefit; which I look upon as the filial spirit and spirit of love given to sons, Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 6; 2 Cor. i. 22; 2 Tim. i. 17. So that, as Isaac, the son of the promise, I can do nothing but through faith, and out of sense of His love and strength, Gal. iv. 28.

15*thly*, That I am not satisfied with any measure of grace, or length in duty, or communion with God, but evermore desire more; which shows to me that it is desired for itself and not for its effects, seeing the least measure of grace will bring to heaven. This was Paul's spirit, Philip. iii. 11, 12, 13; 1 Cor. xv. 57.

16*thly*, Because I find true poverty of spirit, and find a wildness in my best works, and mourn over my best performances, wondering that ever the Lord Jesus should respect them, glorying only in the Lord Jesus, Matth. v. 3; Isa. lxvi. 2. Hypocrites are never emptied of themselves.

17*thly*, I find a hatred, loathing of, and mourning for, all sins of omission as well as commission; sins of others as well as mine own sins; secret sins and little sins as well as great sins; and Gospel sins above all sins; looking on sin as the greatest evil, Matth. v. 4.

18*thly*, Self-loathing and contented submission to the Lord in hardest dispensations, because it is the will of God;

and accepting the punishment of sin, Job i. Hypocrites murmur when tried, and in their heart curse God. This was the trial of Job's sincerity; if he had been an hypocrite, he would have cursed God either in heart or mouth.

19*thly*, Because, in reading of the Scriptures, there is nothing that the Lord's Spirit so applies and takes to my heart as encouragements, and promises, and persuasions, to do good unto others, and patience, and faith; and to be of good cheer, for God will not speak peace to the wicked, Isa. lvii. 21, and iii. 10. "Say to the righteous, It shall be well with them."

20*thly*, I find that, in all evils that befall me, I am never suffered to put an ill-construction upon them; and a spirit secretly suggesting to me that it is for good, so as my heart is no way more sanctified than by this, Rom. viii. 15, and this I look upon as the Spirit's witness.

21*stly*, That I never commit a fault, little or great, but it is corrected, Amos iii. 2, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities:" and this I look upon as a fatherly kindness; nay, that which He suffers in others, He reproves in me.

22*dly*, The Lord by all dispensations is wearying my soul of the world, putting enmity betwixt me and the world more and more; whereby I gather that I am not of the world

23*dly*, The Lord's constant following me with manifold kindnesses and love, in strengthening, comforting, quickening, supporting, visiting, and delivering me, being with me always in all my ways, never leaving me, doing me always good, bearing with all my infirmities. I find the Lord's Providence one constant tract of kindness, bearing me in His arms as an eagle doth her young, by all means commending Himself to me; because He loved first, I am loved to the end. How shall I know a father's heart, but by his fatherly dealing towards me? John xiii. 1.

24*thly*, I have by observation found, that everything works for good to me, the Lord doing good to me by sins, desertions, tentations, and afflictions. The end hath been a discovery of the Lord's kindness in supporting and comforting me when troubled, and delivering me out of it, which hath drawn my love and confidence to Him; by these hath He kept me waking and tried, exercised, and increased any good in me. All His ways I have found mercy and truth, Psal. xxv. 10; Rom. viii. 28.

25*thly*, I have seen grace stamped on all my mercies: as they come of grace, so I am made to see them all flowing in this channel. It is the elect that are saved by grace; the "children of the promise."

26*thly*, When I have been several times in anguish of spirit by reason of doubting of my interest, the Lord Jesus hath come and spoken to my soul in the Gospel, and told me He was reconciled to me; desired me not to fear; that He would do all things for me that I wanted; commanded me to believe; gave me grounds and reasons for believing; and overcame me, and made me believe. And hath He promised and will He not fulfil it? My hopes are built on the promise of God; He "cannot deny Himself."

27*thly*, I remark a special hand of God in all my deliverances. In a word, He lets none do me good but Himself; a token that He is my Lord. Who is it that cares for the children, and provides for the wife, but the husband and father?

SECTION VII.

Declaring some practical considerations and instructions which the Lord taught, and by which I attained to settling and peace as to my interest in Christ, and through which mists, doubts, and fears, were driven away.

I have been, for a long time after the Lord had indeed shown kindness to me, kept under by a spirit of bondage, through fears, and doubts, and mistakes, under which I have groaned for several years after my first conversion, through manifold sins and temptations; which did not only take away my peace, but did me much prejudice otherwise: but in process of time the Lord did dispel these mists and fears, and by His word and Spirit of wisdom made me see things freely given me of God, establishing my heart. He discovered my mistakes, so as now I believe rather that I am converted, and my way and day is lightsome. The means and considerations were:

1. That there may be grace in the soul really, though it appear not gloriously unto the soul. "Our life is hid in Christ," Col. iii. 3; and "we know not what we shall be," 1 John iii. 2. There is indeed a marvellous glory in grace and the spirit of holiness, but it is sullied with corruption; and our eyes are dim, and cannot see this glory but darkly: this is the rust and dross that is in and upon this glorious metal. We are now "lying among the pots; I am black," saith the spouse. Our graces discover themselves by their effects rather than by themselves, as a little smothered fire doth by the smoke; hence, say not there is no grace, because ye see not the glory of it.

2. The Lord made me consider and know, that however, where there is one grace, there are all graces as to their being; yet are not all graces exercised when one is. The exercise of one grace, proceeding from life, shows that all graces are there, though the life of grace stream not nor vent itself in all actions; and, therefore, when we see grace stop one way, it ordinarily breaks out in another. Love cannot delight in God when He is away, because the object of delight must be present; but love vents itself in sorrow for want of, and ardent desires after, the beloved object. I cannot get this and that done, saith the soul; but grace vents itself another way, to wit, in mourning and self-loathing: and we see this frequently in Scripture, that there is ordinarily but one grace exercised, or two at one time; seldom do we see the ship with all her sails up. Think not, therefore, the gracious exercises of thy spirit *delusions* or *common work*, when thou canst not exercise all graces.

3. That grace and corruption are not to be looked upon in their actings on the sensitive and passionate faculties, so much as on the mind and will; for the strength of sin is there. Rom. vii. 21, Paul distinguished the law in his members, and the law of his mind. I thought, and so do many still, that hardness of heart was want of horrors, great fears, and terrors upon the spirit; but, by looking into the Scriptures, I see it consists more in the rebellion of the will and understanding. Mark vi. 52, It is said of the disciples, that "they did not believe, for their hearts were hardened." Pharaoh's hardness of heart did consist in the disobedience of his will. Gross objects and novelties have much influence on the sensitive faculties; therefore there is no ground to fear, though, 1*mo*, We cannot tear nor be tormented with horror for sin; though we find not so passionate desires after God, and so sensible as we do feel in the stomachs when we are hungry, or after an outward object. 2*do*, See what may be the cause why there is more tenderness at first conversion than afterwards. 3*tio*, Learn hence to judge of the graciousness of your spirits by the manner ye resolve in, more than by the executions of your resolutions. The frame of the heart in resolving should be more looked unto than in doing; for the outward court is given unto the Gentiles. Look to your estimations, love, desires, will, purposes, rather than to any other thing

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4. True evangelical repentance consists rather in a sweet melting of heart for sin, and loathing and forsaking of it, than in a fearful sensible apprehension of wrath and horror; for "perfect love casteth out fear." And the humiliation which God requires is, to "break the bands of wickedness," Isa. lviii. 6; otherwise the damned should have most repentance; 2 Cor. vii. 10, "Godly sorrow worketh not death." Do not think thou wantest repentance, though thou wantest horror.

5. That the spirit of bondage, and horrors, and law-work, did in themselves produce evil effects, weakened the hands, drove from the Lord, and were evil in themselves, and con-

trary to the commands of God, "Fear not, cast out the bond-woman" contrary to Christ's ends, "These things have I spoken that ye might have peace;" contrary to Christ's allowance, "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear:" and therefore desire not a law-work or horrors, much less think not yourselves not sincere though ye want it and are kindly dealt with, but be rather thankful. It is true, the Lord by accidents doth good by this legal spirit. It is well distinguished by one, who distinguishes betwixt the event of a thing, and the effect of a thing.

6. "There may be sincerity in the heart, and love to God, when the Lord heareth not prayer, hides His face, and frowns, afflicts, and crosses, and smites in all the labour of the hand: we see, saints complained of this before. The Father is still a father when he chastises, yea, will chastise because he is a father, Amos iii. 2, Be more holy, and please God, and He will be a father to you. These may be trials; when thou therefore findest these things, conclude not that the Lord is thine enemy.

7. The quality, and nature, and sincerity of actions and graces, are rather to be looked into than the measure. Christ notices the widow's mite, and cup of cold water, and the grain of mustard-seed. Consider not then how much, as what: grace and mercy here is but the earnest of glory. You will not question the bargain because of the quantity of the earnest. Be then thankful and rejoice in little mercies; the Lord's people are a poor and needy people. Hast thou love, faith, humility, or knowledge? Then question not your state, though they run low.

8. By powerfully persuading me that it is the duty of all to believe on Christ, to come to Him; yea, both good and bad, humbled and unhumbled, are to rest on Him. It is true, none will believe but humbled sinners; and, therefore, are ministers bound to show them their misery, that they may seek to the physician. But it is the duty of all to believe; it is a moral duty that glorifies God, enjoined to the ignorant Jews, John vi. 28, 29, and the wicked are

damned for want of this. And, therefore, though I find not these qualifications in me, I am not to stay away from Christ, but rather to come; for Christ as a Saviour is declared to save sinners immediately. Though unhumbled, yet it is thy duty to believe, as well as to sanctify a Sabbath.

9. Evils, such as afflictions, desertions, tentations, sins, plagues of heart, though in themselves they be evil, yet are in their end and destination from love and for good. The physician doth not hate because he makes the patient sick, nor doth the parent abhor because he correcteth. Hag. ii. 17, "Smiting in all the labour of the hands" is, that they may turn. Hos. v. 15, The Lord's leaving of a land, and hiding of His face, is, that they may acknowledge their iniquities: the rod is, Isa. xxvii. 9, to "purge away sin." The messenger indeed is hard-favoured and unpleasant to behold, but he hath a love-letter from God, and a sweet message; God therefore may love me, though I be trysted with these evils.

10. Prayers unanswered are not a sign of hatred. God hears, accepts, and loves the prayer, which He presently, to sense, directly answers not. 1*mo*, The beloved people of God complained of this. 2*do*, Unnecessary and needless petitions are only denied, such as great measures of grace, extraordinary raptures. 3*tio*, We ask what is not good for us; God will not give a knife to cut our hands. 4*to*, God never denies His people without a reason, and sometimes shows the reason, 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9. 5*to*, God answers materially and equivalently, though not in our way, fancy, and notion. 6*to*, Christ's answers are oftentimes mysterious, and we uptake them not; when He really answers, it is we that hear not, because Christ opens His mouth in dark sayings. 7*mo*, They are but suspended and not rejected, and shall be answered. 8*vo*, Thou art the better of prayer, it is blessed to thee: what though thou get not what thou goest to court for? yet the Lord gives thee what bears thy charges coming and going, and bids thee come again. 9*mo*, Thou gettest a promise of answer.

11. The love of God to a soul doth vent itself more in humbling, strengthening, and sanctifying the soul, than in comforting it with extraordinary raptures. They are not the strongest nor the best beloved Christians, whose sense is most indulged; "Blessed are they who see not, and believe." Believing Mary is prohibited to touch Christ, and unbelieving Thomas is commanded to put his hands in his side. I have seen some, that have had great raptures of joy, prove but stark naught. The greatest mercy is holiness and grace to honour Him; if God bestow that, doubt not of His love, He will come again in heaven, and vent His love to thee.

12. The love of God doth vent itself to a gracious soul, not always in the channel which the soul cuts out to it to run in; it vents itself under any trouble, rather in supporting and comforting the soul under trouble, than in removing it. When the bush burns, the Lord's love manifests itself, not in quenching the fire altogether, but in keeping the bush unconsumed. Rejoice therefore, if comforted, supported, and sanctified under trouble, though not delivered from it.

13. Our happiness, and Christ's love to us, doth appear and is more in the promise, in Himself, and by what He will give, than by what saints have received or presently feel. "Our life is hid with Christ; and we know not what we shall be." We have now but the earnest; "ear hath not heard, eye hath not seen, what is prepared." Here is sorrow, labour, pain, and wants. Ye will never love Christ, nor rejoice in your portion, if you look not above your receivings, and to what you have in heaven; "Fear not, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

14. A gracious frame doth not always last. True grace, as to the being, never perishes, though as to the disposition and exercise it may and doth. When the Lord hath visited a soul, and made the heart tender, and shined upon it, and then drawn a veil, and the soul findeth itself dead and heartless, it secretly thinketh all that it had formerly to be delusions, and so is unthankful and discouraged; why,

because it is perished, and so at best it is but common. But a thing may remain in its root ("his seed abideth in him") though the leaves fall; yea, it must be so, that thou mightest repair to the fountain, Christ, to fill thy empty bottles in: see it in saints; "All flesh is grass." The meat ye eat in the morning will not serve at night.

15. By considering that the Lord, and His grace, mercy, and truth, is the ground of our hope, rejoicing, and glorying, our life, our light and consolation; He is "the confidence of all the ends of the earth," 1 Cor. i. 31. Therefore our sins or shortcomings, weakness, blindness, should not discourage us, or make us doubt of heaven, or any mercy; because our title is not founded on these, but on the Lord Jesus Himself, and our hopes should be proportioned to the grounds of our hope. "In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength," therefore is there never ground of doubting.

16. As Christ in the days of His flesh, and appearance in the world, was growing up "as a plant out of a dry ground," and that His "kingdom came not with observation;" so may the Lord come quietly without noise or din into a soul, and they not know it. It is a mistake to think, as many do, that when this Lord Jesus and King of glory shall come to the soul, heaven shall be, as it were, opened, and some glorious rapture, as the Jews did dream of His outward coming: no; He may come to the soul in a very poor and despicable condition, and ordinarily He is in the still small voice. Think not therefore that Christ came not to thy soul, because thou hast not seen Him in pomp and glory.

17. The Lord's dealings and method with others are not our rule. It is the cause of much doubting and disquietness, that persons, reading unattentively in books the Lord's way to others, hence cut out this channel to themselves, and think, Thus and thus I must be dealt with, or else not at all, and hence seek; and if the Lord truly come, yet if not in their model, they care not, believe not. 2 Kings v. 11, Because the prophet would not cure Naaman in the way he

proposed, he is offended. Let God tutor you. This is a "limiting of the Holy One." The Lord may really come, and yet never in that way thou chalkest out to Him.

18. By making me consider and seriously ponder, that there is flesh and an unrenewed part, which inclineth to all evil, and leadeth captive to death, as well as there is a new man. And hence be not disquieted, as many are, though ye find carnality, pride, and opposition to every good way; if thou find a renewed part fighting against this, loathing thyself for and mourning under this; but cast the saddle on the right horse; attribute all thy evil to the flesh, and thy good to the Spirit.

19. Times should be distinguished. If in winter ye see neither leaves nor fruit on trees, ye wonder not: this is a winter, a day of famine; and, therefore, though the Lord never wholly leave His people, yet are there certain seasons when all the saints' life and glory may be in the root; this is a day of famine, and of wrath and desolation. The righteous "bring forth fruit in their season."

20. Faith is the most profitable duty to ourselves, most pleasing to God; and, on the contrary, I have found unbelief most hateful and dishonourable to God, and most prejudicial to myself, and therefore by all means to be shunned.

21. Neither books, nor providences, nor suggestions, are our rule to judge ourselves by, nor to be credited absolutely; but the Scripture is our rule, and we are to judge of all things by it, and to fall and stand to this master. And every spirit, suggestion, and apprehension, ere it be admitted, is to be tried by Scripture; and if according to the Scripture ye be found sincere, then let books, suggestions, and all say what they will. And truly, most men's fears and doubts proceed from mistaken marks given in books, or dumb suggestions, I think; but saith the Scripture so? Isa. viii. 20.

22. Look not so much on the beginning of a Christian's life or exercise as to the end; God's dealings begin with

tragedies, and end in comedies. The Lord will "do thee good in thy latter end; the latter end of that man is peace."

SECTION VIII.

Containing general and special Rules for ordering my speech behaviour, and practice.

The Lord's people walk by rule; their life is fitly compared, Heb. xii. 1, to a race; and I have therefore thought upon some general rules to be observed as the foundation of all true religion.

1. *General Rules.*

1*st*, Labour to know and find out wherein a man's chief happiness doth consist: have an end to follow; till a man intend right, he can never have a right motion. Fix the heart in the belief of this, that the enjoyment of God in Christ is our happiness; and make the heart to close with this. Alas! the most of us walk at random, like beasts, without an end. This is the foundation of all, John xvii. 3, "It is life eternal to know God, and Whom He hath sent.

2*d*, It will much contribute to our motion in the way, to be armed with a strong and deliberate resolution to walk in such ways; this will determine us, Psal. cxix. 106, 111, "I have chosen Thy precepts as mine heritage for ever." "I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will observe all Thy righteous judgments." Consider and weigh the advantages and disadvantages of religion, and then thoroughly determine and bind thyself with the strongest engagements; be positive, not halting.

3*d*, Labour to have and keep right, sound, orthodox, and charitable thoughts of God: fix a lovely character of God in thy heart, such as, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. Fix the faith of God's attributes—study this most; "This is life eternal." Rom. x. 14, "How shall they call on Him whom they have not known?" It is a superstitious unprofitable worship that is not to the true God.

4*th*, Be always in duty; racers must keep the gate: never be idle. As there is an end, so there is a way; never sit still. Lay it as a foundation, to be always in duty; never to quit that, whatever it be. 1 Cor. xv. 58, "Always abounding in the work of the Lord." Job xvii. 9, "The righteous holdeth on in his way." We by idleness lose much; we are employed in such a work as we must not suffer to grow cold. Oh, our interruptions do us much prejudice! Little and little makes good speed at last.

5*th*, Walk by faith and not by sense; that is, make the Scriptures thy rule; think, love, judge, and do according to this. Examine all things: As a man hath an end and way so hath he a rule to direct him; this is the Scriptures, 2 Cor. v. 7; Duet. iv. 1, 2; and vi. 1, 2. Reject all other guides but this.

6*th*, Believe always, and never despair; keep the heart up. Whatever come, lose not your confidence; never sink by discouragement, hoping always stedfastly unto the end. "Trust in Him at all times, ye people." Heb. iii. 6, "Hold fast your confidence stedfast unto the end." No ground ever for despair—the ground of faith remains alway; therefore never lose your hope: "It is good for a man to hope," Lam. iii. 26; Isa. xxvi. 4.

7*th*, Live near the Lord always; that which is expressed in Scripture by "walking with God, setting Him always at our right hand." Let heart, thoughts, and affections, retain ever some impressions of His presence; fear always. Keep yourselves in the love of God; if departed, return again; if returned, keep with Him. All good is with God, and all ill comes from His absence and distance: "Woe unto them when I leave them." Lose not your guide by any means; He is "all things," life, light, strength, and health. Ye cannot be without this, Hos. xii. 6, "Wait continually on thy God." Psal. xvi. 8; Gen. xvii. 1; John xv. 4, 5, 6, "Without Me ye can do nothing." Psal. lxxiii. 28, "It is good for me to draw near to God."

8*th*, Be always humble; never murmur; be always vile in thine own eyes; justify the Lord always; submit to every dispensation; let never your spirits be rankled or fired. Micah vi. 8, "Walk humbly with thy God.

9*th*, Keep your spirits sober and in health; if sick and distempered, ye cannot travel: not drunken with the "cares of this world," Luke xii. 45. Be not lifted up with pride or passion; he whose spirit is lifted up within him is not right. Keep your spirits in an equal balance, 1 Pet. v. 8, "Be sober;" suffer not your passions to run to excess: sober in weeping, rejoicing, speaking, doing, fearing, Phil. iv. 5; 1 Cor. vii. 30. Be always master of thyself; unshaken.

10*th*, Study temperance—this is objective sobriety; temperance in meat, drink, sleep, and recreations. Shun excess, by which the spirits are indisposed. The Heathen call temperance the ground-work and foundation of all virtue, 2 Pet. i. 5, 6; Prov. xxiii. 20. Racers must be dieted and temperate, 1 Cor. ix. 25, "He that warreth must be temperate in all things." Surfeiting is forbidden, Luke xxi. 34.

11*th*, Beware of worldly-mindedness, and being too much engaged in the world: "He that warreth doth not entangle himself in the affairs of this life," 2 Tim. ii. 4. Have as little ado in the world as ye can; take no more in hand than ye are well able to master. If engaged, flee as a bird out of the snare, and put thy house in order, but put the world out of thy heart especially: "No man can serve two masters."

12*th*, Be watchful: beware of a spirit of slumber, stand always on your guard; "Watch in all things," as the apostle commanded Timothy. "Blessed is the man that feareth always." Be always suspicious, Prov. xxviii. 14. Never turn secure or careless; remember your adversary is still busy, and his snares are continually set: "Be vigilant" therefore, 1 Pet. v. 8. Keep your eyes always open; look and ponder everything; be not rash or hasty.

13*th*, Be diligent in the means both public and private, in hearing, meditation, Christian conference, ejaculatory prayer, reading; especially private prayer; a man cannot be a Christian without this. Ye cannot work or travel unless ye eat, Prov. x. 4, "The hand of the diligent maketh rich."

14*th*, Look upon sin as the greatest evil, and never to be done; whatever ye do, shun sin, and shun tentations to evil as well as evil itself.

2. *Rules I daily follow in my daily walk: or, some special Rules for ordering my own particular conversation.*

1*st*, In imitation of Christ and His apostles, and to get good done, I purpose to rise timely every morning, Job. i. 5; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15.

2*d*, To propose, when I am up, some work to be done, or the work of the day, and how and when to do it, and to engage my heart to it, 1 Tim. iv. 7, and even to call myself to account, and to mourn for failings.

3*d*, To spend a competent portion of time every day in prayer, reading, meditating, spiritual exercises, morning, mid-day, evening and ere I go to bed.

4*th*, Once in the month either the end or middle of it, I keep a day of humiliation for the public condition, for the Lord's people and their sad condition, for the raising up the work and people of God.

5*th*, I spend, by and attour this, one for my own private condition, in conflicting with spiritual evils, and to get my heart more holy, or to get some special exercise throughed, once in six weeks.

6*th*, I spend every week once, four hours over and above my daily portion in private for some special causes relating either to myself or others, relating either to temporal or civil affairs.

7*th*, To spend some time on Saturday towards night for preparation to the Sabbath.

8*th*, To spend six or seven days together once in a year, when I have greatest conveniency, wholly and only on spiritual accounts.

9*th*, My ordinary and extraordinary works, which every day I strive to finish, are, to mortify sin, to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord, so glorify God, to instruct others and do them good, to attend on and walk closely with the Lord. This I propose every day to myself to do and finish, and at even do examine myself of my progress and diligence therein; this is my work and exercise.

10*th*, To be always on my guard, in a watchful, fearing frame.

3. *Rules in speaking.*

I have found by Scripture and experience how much it concerns us to watch our tongues, it being that instrument whereby we may do most ill or good to others, that hath influence on the whole body. And seeing religion kyths most in this ("He that bridleth not his tongue, his religion is vain;" and whoso can, is a perfect man,") I will therefore set down some rules which I have proposed to myself for ordering my speech and words.

1*st*, Speak nothing materially sinful, such as lying, swearing, cursing, scolding, backbitting, or anything that may dishonour God, or wrong your neighbour, Psalm xxxiv. 13.

2*d*, Speak no idle language, that hath no profit or edification, such as frothy words, foolish talking and jesting; but let them be seasoned with grace, as with salt, Eph. v. 4; Mat. xii. 36.

3*d*, Speak not much; be sparing in discourse, James i. 19, "Slow to speak." "In the multitude of words there wants not sin."

4*th*, Speak soberly both as to matter and manner. It is said of the whore, Prov. vii. 11, "She is loud and clamorous;" and of some, Jude, ver. 16, that they "speak high swelling words." This is contrary to Christ, whose "voice was not heard in the streets." A meek, quiet spirit is calm in words; loud, violent, earnest speaking argues a proud, distempered, unmortified heart.

5*th*, Speak not rashly nor hastily; be not precipitate in speaking; advise ere ye speak; do not out with every thing ye conceive: "The righteous studieth to answer."

6*th*, Speak weightily and seriously, reverently and gravely, in religious discourses especially. Christ "spake as one having authority.' Our speech as to the manner, as well as to the matter, should betray us that we "have been with Jesus." Be not slight or careless.

7*th*, Speak in faith: "I believed, and therefore spake," Psal. cxvi. 10; 2 Cor. iv. 13. It is a fault to speak of those things we neither know nor believe; uncertainties are not fit matter of discourse: "That which we know declare we unto you."

8*th*, In speaking, it were good to be looking up in prayer to God in heart; as, if ye have spoken amiss, O Lord, pardon; when ye are called to speak, O Lord, open my mouth, and help to a seasonable word, and what to say; to seek a blessing, Lord, bless what I am to discourse to my neighbour. Thus did Nehemiah, Neh. ii. 4.

9*th*, Speak wisely and pertinently to the time and purpose ye intend, and persons ye speak to; that is called "speaking words in season." Col. iii. 16, "Let the Word of Christ dwell richly in you in all wisdom, admonishing one another."

10*th*, Speak in fear: it were good to have a bridle always in the mouth, and no word to get out without permission, Psal. xxxix. 1. It was ill said, "Our lips are our own, who is Lord over us;" As there is eating without fear, so there is speaking without fear.

11*th*, Let not your neighbour's faults be the subject of your talk, though it be true. "Who backbiteth not," Psal. xv. 3. Show thy neighbour his faults.

12*th*, Speak not of thyself or worth: "Let another praise thee, and not thine own mouth," neither directly nor indirectly; let thy works praise thee. It is an ordinary thing for a proud heart to hunt for estimation from others to itself, by telling its own acts or resolutions. I have added these last two, because professors ordinarily miscarry in these.

4. *Rules in our actions.*

I shall comprehend in this both civil and religious actions; actions should not only be good as to their matter, but as to their manner.

1*st*, Do nothing without foresight; let thine eye of knowledge guide thee continually in the way thou art to walk in. Lam. iii. 40, first "search and try your ways," then "turn." "Ponder the path of thy feet." Do all things as a man, and by rule, Prov. iv. 26, so shalt thou have peace.

2*d*, Whatever thou do, do it spiritually as the Lord's work; as to Him, because commanded by Him, Eph. vi. 6, 7, 8; Col. iii. 23.

3*d*, Labour for spirituality in your outward deportments, as well as in your hearts, in a grave, wise, sober, and humble carriage. "Be holy in all manner of conversation," 1 Peter i. 14, 15. Let holiness be on bells, pots, bridles, and horses, Zech. xiv. 20, 21. Have on the wedding-garment.

4*th*, In midst of business look up ever and anon to heaven by ejaculatory prayer, to preserve the soul from corruption; and keep divine impressions, that they die not out, Eph. vi. 18; 1 Thess. v. 17.

5*th*, Whatever thou doest, depend on the Lord; do nothing without Him, but "in all thy ways acknowledge Him," Prov. iii. 6; Isa. xxx. 2; Psal. xxxvii. 5; Neh. ii. 4; 1 Sam. xvii. 45.

6*th*, Whatever ye do, "do it with all thine heart," *i.e.*, quickly, without delay, and heartily, doing what thou doest only, and nothing else, Eccl. ix. 10.

7*th*, Whatever ye do, do it in faith, without which "it is impossible to please God;" in faith of the lawfulness of it, in faith of God's assistance and acceptance: else, doubting, ye are damned, Rom. xiv. 22, 23; Heb. xi. 6, 7. Do nothing without or against conscience.

8*th*, Be sober in what ye do: eat, drink marry, and buy, as though ye did it not, in an holy indifferency, referring the event to God, 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 31. Be not fretted with cares, lay not out too much affections or heart with your actions; but "let your moderation be known to all men, the Lord is at hand," Philip. iv. 5.

9*th*, Rest not in actions, but seek the end of an action, Matth. vi 16. Rest not in prayer, but labour to attain the end of prayer by meditation and prayer. Be not like children shooting at random without a mark.

10*th*, Bound your actions with your callings: fight, but not out of your station, 1 Cor. vii. 24, "Let every man wherein he is called walk with God." 1 Thess. iv. 11; 1 Tim. v. 13, Doing your own business.

5. *Rules for our conversation.*

1*st*, Mark the frame of your heart and your carriage immediately after you have been near God; and see what deportment ye are then inclined to follow, and study that always.

2*d*, Follow that kind of conversation wherein ye have most peace after serious reflections on your ways. I think little peace shall be found in a light, furious, carnal conversation.

3*d*; Look to the carriage of Christ, His apostles and prophets, and study that conversation that ye think was Christ's or the apostles'; this was not a laughing, frothy, vain, light conversation. When, therefore, thou art examining such a carriage, ask, Would Christ have done this? would this set Paul to do? 1 Cor. xi. 1, and iv. 17; Matth. xi. 29, 30.

4*th*, Study that conversation which is most agreeable and suitable to your profession, Gospel estate, and station, 1 Thess. ii. 12. Walk "as becometh the Gospel," suitably to the providences ye are trysted with, James v. 13, and to the persons ye have to do with.

5*th*, Walk not outwardly mournfully before the wicked, who may be ready to make sport of thy sadness, nor before those who may be discouraged. Shun carnal mirth, Micah i. 10; 2 Sam. i. 20.

6*th*, Study that conversation which is most edifying, most convincing and condemning of the wicked, 1 Pet. i. 14, 15, and likest to glorify God and the Gospel, Col. iv. 6.

7*th*, A grave serious conversation, mixed with serenity, is a good conversation; and this is like Christ, this is suitable to our great work and aims. Let the mad children of the world trifle and play, we are called to seriousness, 1 Tim. iii. 2; Tit. ii. 2.

8*th*, Be circumspect in your conversation, and wise, especially "towards them that are without," Eph. v. 15; Eccl. ii. 14. Keep up the Christian decorum; let nothing escape thee but what is befitting the majesty of a Christian; labour not to disparage that at all. Walk worthy of your calling.

9*th*, Walk soberly in apparel, 1 Pet. iii. 3, sober in passions, sober in expressions; do nothing violently or passionately, keeping passions within bounds. Walk with a sober pace, not "tinkling with your feet."

10*th*, Walk kindly, lovingly, and courteously; be ready to serve all. A tart, rigid carriage is not good; "the Son of man came eating and drinking," Acts xxvii. 3, and xxviii. 2, 7. Stoicism is not Christianity. Through thy gravity and holiness let love appear; receive all; "become all things to all men" except with apostates and open enemies; yea, let your reproofs be in love, Lev. xix. 17.

SECTION IX.

Declaring such things as, through the Lord's blessing, have done me good.

I cannot deny but the Lord hath shown me kindness and done me good, and that a little one hath become a great nation, and that, however "I am poor and needy," yet "the Lord remembers me." And notwithstanding "I came over this Jordan with my staff," yet now am I, by the Lord's blessing, "become two bands." But whatever good it be that the Lord hath shown me for the benefit of others, and confirmation of myself, I have thought fit to show and set down these things, which in my experience, through the Lord's blessing, I have found to be most helpful unto me in furthering me in the ways of holiness, peace, and fellowship with God. And I have found these twenty-seven things especially concur, and blest for doing me good:

1. The society of saints: When they have been full in communicating their cases, they have encouraged me, my griefs have been eased by them; I have by their godly conversation, been provoked to good works; I have been kept in life by them, recovered out of decays by them, enlightened and edified by them, Eccl. iv. 4, 9, 10, 11; 1 Cor. xii. 7; Heb. x. 24, 25; Prov. xxvii. 17. "Iron sharpeneth iron."

2. I have found much profit by observing the Lord's providences, by searching into God's ends in dispensations, whether good or evil; this hath made me see much love in things, freed my judgment from confusions, and made me know my duty, Micah vi. 9; Hosea xiv. 9; Psalm cvii. 43; Jer. viii. 7; Gen xxv. 22; Exod. iii. 3, 4.

3. I have found meditation on the attributes of God to do me much good, especially His love, power, sovereignty, and holiness, Job xxii. 21; John xvii. 3, for thereby have I been made conform to his image, and my love, fear, and faith, have been begotten and increased, Psal. ix. 10; Eph. iii. 18, 19.

4. I have found much good by a long and serious study and pondering of the covenant of grace; the freedom, fulness, and unchangeableness thereof; the condition (faith), and nature thereof. By meditation on the Gospel, Gospel-promises, offers, and invitations; this hath strengthend and sanctified me, given me more knowledge of Christ and of His ways than anything that ever I was exercised in. I have found it indeed the "ministrations of life," Gal. iii. 2; Heb. xi. throughout; Rom. i. 16, 17.

5. I have found the Lord confining me at home, in not

calling me abroad; ordinarily this hath been a gathering time, and never ordinarily better than when alone. Abstraction and solitude hath done me good, Prov. xviii. 1; Numb. vi. 2, 3; Hos. ii. 14. God hath oftentimes visited me in a solitary wilderness.

6. I have found outward afflictions and hard measure from the world doing me good, humbling my soul, mortifying me to the world, making Christ and His consolations sweet, Whom before I cared not much for; I found it good to bear the yoke in my youth; I have thereby learned dependence on God, and have had much experience of His love in supporting me under afflictions, sanctifying them to me, and delivering me out of them, Lam. iii. 27; Psal. xciv. 12; Heb. xii. 11; Psal. cxix. 67, 71; Prov. xxix. 15; Hos. v. 15.

7. I have found quietness in spirit, moderation and calmness in speaking, and advisedness doing me good; and, while thus in silence I have waited on God, His spirit, hath breathed, Isa. vii, 4, and ix. 15; Exod. xiv. 13; 2 Chron. xx. 17; Phil. iv. 7; Lam. iii. 26; 1 Pet. v. 7.

8. I have found much good by the diligent practice of private duties, such as prayer, meditation, reading, self-examination, and such like. I have thereby been strengthened, quickened, and drawn near to God; they have been as meat and drink, Mat. vi. 6; Luke xxii. 46; Psalm i. 2, 3; Job viii. 5; Prov. xviii. 1.

9. I have found extraordinary duties of fasting, and improving other occasions over and above the morning and evening sacrifice, do me much good; much of the Lord's mind by these hath been revealed, Dan. x. 12, and strong lusts have by these extraordinary occasions received a dead stroke. I have been sensibly comforted at these occasions; these, after long sickness, have given me health, Psalm cxxvi. 6; Jer. i, 5, 6; Isa. lviii. 7, 8; Mark ix. 29.

10. I have found the Lord kind to me since I left off hearing of the conformists; since that day the scales have been falling from my eyes: Whilst I heard, I was still kept in bondage, 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18; 1 Cor. v. 7.

11. I have found much good from and by the prayers of others; for since I did employ some for that effect, I have found much good. And I have observed, that those of us who do seek the benefit of other's prayers were the most thriving Christians: and those who neglect this to decay and wither, Job xlii. 8; James v. 16; Eph. vi. 19; Rom. xv. 30; 2 Thess. iii. 1, 2.

12. I have found very much good by doing good to others, by instructing, exhorting, and teaching of them, and praying for them, especially the poor ignorant people. Yea, in the very time while I have been speaking to them, a glorious light hath shined upon my soul, and made me apprehend those things I have been declaring to them more clearly; yea, when full of confusions and sorrows going about this duty, my heart hath thereby been lightened, my talents improved, Isa. xxxii. 20; Eccl. xi. 1; Prov. xi. 25.

13. I have found the serious consideration of true Christian liberty, and of the easiness of Christ's yoke, and Christ's love in commands, in opposition to a slavish spirit and scrupulous fearful conscience, do me very much good, and make my heart engage in the service of God, 1 Kings xii. 4; Luke i. 74; Rom. vii. 1, 4, 6, and vi. 14; Neh. ix. 35; Duet. xxviii. 48, as likewise using considerations against discouragements, 1 Sam. xii. 19, 20.

14. I have found much profit and strength by considering of baptism, and what it sealeth; cases and scruples thereby cleared and removed, and faith of interest strengthened, and I thereby emboldened to draw near to God, Rom. vi., first twelve verses.

15. The Lord hath blessed the reading of practical writings to me, and thereby my heart hath been put into a frame, and much strength and light gotten; such as Isaac Ambrose, Goodwin, Mr Gray, and very much by Rutherford's above others, but most of all by Thomas Shepherd of New England his works; he hath by the Lord been made the "interpreter, one of a thousand;" so that, under Christ, I have been obliged to his writings as much and more than

to any mean whatsomever for wakening, strengthening, and enlightening of my soul; the Lord made him a well of water to me in all my wilderness straits.

16. I have found it good to put a good construction on the Lord's ways, when they have been outwardly very sad, Exod. xx. 19.

17. I have found much good by speaking to the praise and commendation of God. When many times not so affectionately, yet sincerely out of the sense of duty, I have begun to praise Him to others, I have found my tongue to have affected my heart, James iii. 2; Psalm cv. 3, and cxlv. 5, 6, 11. The Lord hath sensibly rewarded me for this.

18. I have found much good by sore and long inward tentations, being "poured from vessel to vessel," changing and being changed, lifted up, and casten down; the greatest settlement is by these. Isa. xxxviii. 16, "By these" (saith Hezekiah) "shall men live." These humbled me, and kept me waking, and ever crying to the Lord; and have given me much experience of the Lord's kindness, and acquainted me with the exercise of saints in the Scripture, James i. 2.

19. Resisting of strong tentations, and engaging with difficult duties, and coming over the belly of indispositions within, loss and contempt from the world without, and so taking up the cross; the Lord hath signally owned me in these, and the fruits of them have been very great; such as, praying under indispositions, reproving of acquaintances, forsaking of ways and thoughts very pleasing to the flesh, Jer. ii. 1, 2; Heb. xi. 6; Rom. ii. 7; Mat. v. 10, and xvi. 24.

20. I have found much good by studying and exercising the duty of humility and submission, James iv. 7. Duties are easy to an humble spirit; it eases the soul of disquietments, and makes burdens easy. Hell is not hell to an humble soul, saith Shepherd. I have ever found help when humbled.

21. The calling to mind and seriously meditating on the

Lord's dealings with me as to soul and body, His manifold mercies, has done me very much good, cleared my case, confirmed my soul of God's love, and my interest in Him, and made me love Him. O what good hath the writing of this book done me! and what wells of water have mine eyes been opened to see which before were hid! Psalm cvii. 4, and xviii. 1, 2. Scarce anything hath done me more good.

22. Making and renewing of vows and covenants with God, though gone about in much weakness, and but weakly performed, yet hath it begotten life, and kindly thoughts of God, and hath been a mean to recover me out of decay, and to keep from further backsliding, Duet. xxix. 12, 13.

23. Meditation on the most common truths and general hath done me good, such as death, heaven, judgment, sin, God's being and providence, man's fall, and Christ's death, etc.

24. Speedy going about duties, without trifling or delaying. A duty done in time is worth twice so much delayed.

25. By writing on points of divinity; as on the Scriptures, on God's attributes, on Christian duties, sermons, cases, and the like; these, like fresh water, have kept my heart.

26. Serious and deliberate self-examination, and, while thus exercised, trying myself, looking to the qualifications of saints and hypocrites in Scripture, their sins and failings; studying the nature of true saving grace, the difference, according to the Scriptures, betwixt false and true grace; this hath contributed much to my settlement.

27. I have found much good by being abstracted from meddling in temporal or civil business. That I had not great meddling in affairs in the beginning of my Christian course, partly that others did not employ me, but took all to their own hand; partly that I was indifferent, and had no heart while I had so great things ado in reference to my soul. And although my affairs called for diligence, yet do I

not now repent it; for I thereby got my heart wholly taken up with my soul's condition, and had no divertisement, Prov. xviii. 1.

SECTION X.

Declaring such things as have done me evil.

1. A legal spirit. When Satan presses duties violently and boastingly, with thunder and lightening overdriving me, laying more upon me than I am able to bear, putting new wine in old bottles, seeking such and such duties, and so much, exacting them by weight and measure. This weakens my hands, irritates me, makes me do nothing, seeing I cannot get what is enjoined done; makes me act slavishly, Gen. xxxiii. 13; Rom. vii. 11; Heb. x. 12, 13; Luke xix. 21.

2. The society of carnal unregenerate people, and graceless formal professors, especially if familiar with them, and not living very abstract and at distance from them, or not testifying against them or instructing them. They have, when near, dispersed their poison and infection, and turned my heart carnal; like some sicknesses, if ye lie not near the persons that have them, they smite not, 1 Cor. xv. 33, "Evil communication corrupteth good manners."

3. I have found the society of the godly hurtful, and drawing my heart from God, and rendering it carnal, when it hath not been spiritually improven; when the Lord hath not been sought to by mutual prayer, and no spiritual conference, and when I have stayed too long with them at once, Heb. iii. 13. When there is no exhorting one another there is hardening.

4. I have had my spirit turned out of frame, and quite distempered by loud, violent, hasty, and much talk, though of good purposes. I have found "the talking of the lips tend to penury," and "a breach made in the spirit," (as saith the wise man), "by perverse speaking, James iii. 5, 6; Prov. xvii. 27; Mat. xv. 8.

5. I have found public occasions and going oft from home hurtful, and these like the devil's market-days. Let me prepare and pray as I will; yea, and watch, my spirit hath thereby been distracted and distempered, especially if I have gone on slight calls. Riding here and there is good neither for soul nor body.

6. I have found intemperance and excess in the use of meat, drink, and other recreations, very prejudicial, and to be the ordinary inlet of many evils; for the body thereby being distempered, the spirit hath been utterly indisposed to any good exercise, Luke xxi. 34; Prov. xxv. 27, and xxiii. 20, 21.

7. Omission of duties in private, or slight performance of them; when I have begun to be more remiss in such gracious exercises of prayers, examination, meditation, and reading, Mat. xxvi. 41; Prov. xxiii 21.

8. Neglect of ejaculatory prayer when conversing with others; for this is the fountain of waters that drops from heaven, and makes the heart fruitful, Mat. xxvi. 41.

9. Impertinent vain thoughts in the morning, and when riding, and when in private religious exercises; though materially good, I have found these to distemper my spirit as much as anything, and to render me utterly unfit for duty, Jer. iv. 14.

10. Unwatchfulness and heart security while in the world, not being "in the fear of God all the day long," not keeping guard, or neglecting the continual oversight of my heart, tongue, and actions, but growing careless. I have found my heart unwatched to run away, and engage in sins and tentations: Many disorders in the city while there is no government, Mat. xxvi. 41. This hath done evil exceedingly; through this I lose in public what I gain in private.

11. Unbelieving discouragements arising from sense of wants, sins, desertions, and tentations; these have weakened my hands, 1 Sam. xii. 20; Lam. i. 9; Jer. ii. 28: Heb. xii. 12, 13. When Peter did fear, then did he begin to sink.

12. Great engagements in civil affairs and business, and eager prosecution of them; these have distracted me, and made me utterly unserviceable to God, Luke x. 4, and xxi. 34.

13. Pride, and conceiting much of myself, boasting of myself, seeking the praise of men, and by a careful performance of duties, seeking to exalt myself, and to share with Christ in the matter of salvation; this hath made the Lord reject me many times, withdrawing me from my resolution to "hide pride," Rom. ix. 31, 32. This made the Jews miss of righteousness, because they sought it "as it were by the works of the law."

14. Sloth in long sleeping, and trifling the time; this hath "clothed me with rags," especially in company.

SECTION XI.

Declaring some of Satan's spiritual and more subtle devices, whereby the work of sanctification hath been much hindered, 2 Cor. ii. 11.

1. In making me think the essence of true repentance to consist in contrition for sin more than in turning in heart and practice from it; whereby it hath come to pass, that not finding myself in a mourning sorrowful frame, but straitened in my affections, I have not turned from sin, but was still taken up in drawing out my sensible sorrow for it, as thinking there was no true repentance without this; and, when I mourned, have rested in this, as if this were sufficient; whereas, repentance doth mostly consist in turning to God, and mourning is but the manner and qualification of this act of turning, Jeol ii. 12. "Turn with mourning," Isa. lviii. 6. "The fast God hath chosen is, breaking the bands of wickedness," Prov. xxi. 3.

2. After falls and slips, and ordinary departures, Satan has sought to astonish me with my fall, and to amaze and confuse me so with what I had done, as thereby I was kept

from getting up to my feet and going forwards; like those that, running a race, catch a fall, and are therewith so perplexed, thinking what to do, that in the meantime they lose much time, and are far behind. The best way were to get up, and consider our ways, mourn, seek pardon, and then go to work; so was it with Joshua, chap. vii. 10, viz., Joshua, after the smiting of Israel, lies complaining; the Lord saith thus, "Wherefore liest thou thus? up to thy work." Gen. xlii. 1, and xliii. 10, "Why look ye upon one another?" When David sinned, he immediately falls to repentance; "I have sinned, yet now, Lord, forgive." It must, when all is done, turn and end in this. So in Job xxxiv. 32, "If thou hast done wickedly," what is done cannot be helped, "do so no more." He doth not say, Amaze and distract yourselves with cares, for, "Who can by thinking add one cubit to his stature?"

3. In making me think that because I come not up the full length of duty, or to do it in that manner and form that is required, better omit it than do it in such a sinful manner; whereby it hath come to pass that nothing hath been done at all, God not honoured, and others not profited; not considering that doing the duty as we may is a mean to the better doing of it, as scribbling is to good writing. Humility will not stand on such niceties; the Lord pardons imperfections: hence the duty of reproof hath been omitted, because I could not do it so freely, evangelically, and plainly, as the Lord requires, thinking that so doing of it was an abomination; this is over-driving. But it is better paying what we may than let all run on our head. 2 Sam. vi. 7, 8, 9, 10, when David saw what reverence was required to the ark, he let it alone, "Who can stand?" Unbelief whereby the soul thinks God such a hard master that will exact to the uttermost, and pride in disdaining to do anything but what may be worthy or meritorious, are the causes of this deceit.

4. By the injecting of thoughts materially good, yet impertinent to the exercise the soul for the present is called unto, whereby my purpose hath been broken, my spirit made

vain, no good done, nor peace in it. And when other palpably sinful thoughts have been extruded, these real enemies, yet seeming friends, have been let in because of their "sheep's clothing;" and it is but the devil transforming himself into an "angel of light," 2 Cor. xi. 14. The righteous "bringeth forth fruit in season;" these thoughts are vain because fruitless and unseasonable.

5. In doing of duties, and not seeking to attain the end of duties, not because I thought this worthy, but I thought it sufficient if the Lord was honoured. And in this snare I am ordinarily entrapped, though beaten out of formality; and this hath rendered the means useless to me, and "ever learning," and "never coming to the knowledge of the truth." I have been like children, who with their little bows shoot, but at no mark, but that they may shoot; or as when they set their paper-boats to sea, but look for nothing else than to see them swim upon the waters; and so it may be said of them, "There is no end of their labour." And hence I have exhorted, not to convert or edify, but because commanded, and to show obedience, and sometimes to render inexcusable; and thus have waited on the Lord in private and public means, not for supplying of wants or drawing near unto God, but merely to do homage unto Him. Whereby there is a standing still and no progress; duties rendered a burden, because no end to draw to, or no end intended; and my motion irregular, because no end to direct; and so have wrote at random.

6. Under the pretence of waiting on the Lord for strength, I have been driven to gaze, and neglect the duty itself, when there hath been an oppurtunity; so in preparing for prayer, have neglected prayer: In looking for strength and grace to edify when in company, nothing hath been done; and strength received, not improven. Acts i. 11, "Why stand ye gazing?" go to your work, to Jerusalem. Matth. xx. 6; Jer. xiii. 16, "Give glory to the Lord," lest, looking for light, darkness come.

7. To neglect the practice of grace and duty, by resting

in the sweet and relishing speculation thereof, and resolution to do it; I have been taken up with the sweetness of duty on the mind, but not so careful to practice it, though there have been some slight resolutions. This I thought sufficient, or else through security I have not expected difficulty in the practice; and so, knowing and approving and teaching others the Law, yet neglecting it, they "say and do not," Rom. ii. 13, 14, 18; Matth. vii. 21; Jer. ii. 19, 20. So that the end of these speculations hath not been so much to practise as to relish and delight the understanding in expatiating on such subjects.

8. I have been much hindered from duty, by studying the manner of duty rather than the substance of it; by studying faith in prayer rather than prayer in faith; by studying openness and plain-dealing in reproving rather than reproof itself; by studying constancy in watching rather than watching itself. Which I have found to proceed from pride, choosing the excellency of it rather than the thing itself; and from Satan's persuading me that all commands are but the Lord's seeking ground of quarrel to cast out with me, and therefore not only seeks duties, but that they be done after such a manner as thou knowest thou canst not get done; that so, when He cannot condemn for the matter, He shall be sure for the manner to find fault. Whereby my mind hath been so taken up with the circumstantial, and perfect, and exact qualifications of duties, that the matter and substance of it hath been neglected. I have made the manner of it the matter.

9. Satan, with my foolishness, tyrannically yet subtilely presses the doing of many things at once, which is impossible; that so, dividing my spirit with several objects, nothing may be well done, and all slighted: so that when I came to say, "What have I ado? it is answered, Ye have this, and that, and the other thing; when I am called to one thing, I address to another, and thus "troubled with many things," like Martha, Luke x. 41, 42; with which one thing, if my spirit were taken up, I might come to some profit and

get it done; but, seeking to grasp too much, I let all go. When many crowd out or in at a passage, they hinder one another; but the rule is, "Whatever thou dost, do it with all thy might," *i.e.*, Let thy heart be taken up wholly with that one thing while thou art doing it, and with no other.

10. Satan's transforming into an angel of light, by gilding vices with lustre and appearance of virtue, and under spiritual and specious pretences. Hence have I been tempted to lightness, excess in comforts, under pretence of shunning unthankfulness, and of not using Christian liberty, and of walking uncomfortably; and hence neglected to affect the heart with the evil of sin, because repentance consists more in turning from sin than in sorrow for it. Prayer under indisposition hath been shunned, lest I should render the easy yoke of Christ a grievous burden. Whereby sin hath prevailed by these, when it hath been overcome when it appeared in its own clothing; and "the grace of God turned into wantonness," 2 Cor. xi. 14; Rom. vi. 1; Gal. v. 13; "called to liberty, yet not to use it as an occasion to the flesh."

11. In following the disposition of my spirit as a rule in reference to duty, rather than the call of providential conveniency of doing it; whereby many occasions of doing good, to others especially, have been lost through indisposition to these duties, and some seeming dispositions to do other duties. And this is so much the more dangerous, that it begins to be a debated principle, which of the two, viz., the disposition of the spirit or providential conveniency is to be followed? seeing, if I follow not the disposition of my spirit, then I shall do the other duty but heartlessly, and omit a duty to which my spirit is disposed; and besides, James v. 13, would seem to be for it. But I have most peace and success when I follow the providential conveniency, Mark xiv. 37, 38.

12. There is nothing does me more ill than a legal spirit or spirit of bondage, whereby Satan presses to duties violently, *i.e.*, represents God as a hard master and

an austere judge; as one that commands and requires duties, as tyrannical rulers make laws to entrap the subjects, pressing to hard duties, and so putting new wine into old bottles, and that under the highest pains; and to do it hastily, not giving time to breathe; and requiring such exactness, or else not at all to be accepted; and that without any promise of assistance. So that, finding the Lord's yoke so hard, I have either casten it off, or sometimes heartlessly performed it; and nothing hath prejudiced me more than this. Talents have been slighted, because God was apprehended as a hard master; the Lord not served, because our yoke not made light; aversion and want of love to God, because of fear, 1 John iv. 18. But I have spoken of this in Section 10, 1*st Evil.* It is no wonder, therefore, if the bond-woman should be cast out; of the evil of which, when I have been convinced, I have come to the other extreme, in casting out the bond-woman altogether, and to indulge myself wholly, as I have said in the 10*th Deciet.*

13. When I could not be driven from laying to heart matters of salvation, yet hath Satan, for the most part of my time, busied me with the lesser matters of religion, and made me neglect the substantial and fundamental points; so as nice points have been studied, and death, hell, heaven, God's attributes, sin, providence, the resurrection, fall of man, have been neglected, because more common; whereas the greatest good is in these, Matth. xxiii. 23, "Ye tithe anise and cummin."

14. Satan, by making me pore excessively on evidences of grace, and by occupying me in laying continually the foundation and trying it, as thinking it never sure enough, hath thereby kept me from my generation-work, and from progress in grace; in which exercises, if I had been as diligent as in examination of myself, I might have been assured more quickly, 2 Pet. i. 10. It is true, we should examine our states, 2 Cor. xiii. 5, but it is wrong to be only and continually taken up with this; so that, when called to patience, and believing, and honouring of God, Satan hath

said, Lay a foundation ere ye build a superstructure: but it is dangerous to be trying our armour when we are called to fight (as one said), Heb. vi. 1. If ye have not full assurance of your state, yet take your hazard of the precious foundation laid in Zion, and build on it. God lays this foundation, and this foundation standeth sure.

15. In making faith or any work in us the foundation of my comfort, rather than the free, full, and immutable promise and goodwill of God in Christ; and in making the foundation of duty to be rather from our covenant with God, or our part of it, than from the Lord's covenant with us, and His part of it which hath a long time kept me unsettled and wavering, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5; Ezek. xvi. 62. "Not by virtue of thy covenant."

16. But Satan and mine own heart hath kept me strongly and long in this snare of seeking to establish my own righteousness. For when my heart hath been in any good frame, and under sense of wants, and desiring to be found in duty, hath resolved to go about such and such means, for obtaining of such things; I say, I have found Satan deceiving me herein, making me love these duties, means, and graces, and the obtaining them at such a time, because these graces and duties, means, and time, have been the product of mine own desires and resolutions, and so have been mine own (as it were) and choice. And, therefore, when other means were bestowed no less suitable, yet have I dispised them, because not mine own choice and purchase; and when the love and manifestation thereof have run through another channel than I have cut for it to run in, I have been grieved, and prized the mercy less. And when I have fallen in sins resolved against, I have grieved more upon the account that my resolutions have been broken, and will crossed, because I had "set my heart as the heart of God," than either for the wrong done to God or mine own hazard; and so, like God, I have loved no thing but the object of my own decree. Whereby God hath been provoked to break these resolutions, by which

the tower that reached to heaven was cast down, Prov. xix. 3; Rom. x. 3; Mark xiv. 37; Isa. x. 7; Psal. lviii. 3.

17. When beaten out of this by the Lord's mercy, and made to "rejoice in infirmities," that God may be exalted, seeing the wildness of pride under the pretence of quiet submission, and being led by the will of God, I have been tempted to resolve nothing at all, and so turned careless, running from one extreme to another, contrary to Philip. ii. 12, 13.

18. Through a desire to allow to every action a time wherein I should be so and so exercised, it hath come to pass that I have secretly resisted the Spirit drawing me to other duties and exercises, because I would not alter my intended method; and so lost the assistance of God's Spirit, Duet. i. 41; Numb. xiv. 39.

19. I have many times in prayer asked things not convenient to be then granted, and so have not been answered through asking amiss; as when I have sought as much grace as would serve me all my lifetime, James iv. 3; John iv. 15. "Give me that I thirst not again." Sometimes I have been seeking the removal of a trouble ere I have been rightly exercised under it, 2 Cor. xii. 8, sought great enlargements, and raptures, and sensible manifestations, sought mercies without pains; which the Lord not granting, because amiss, I have deen discouraged from prayer through refusals.

20. When difficult duties have been pressed, as mourning, fasting, diligence, prayer under indispositions, bearing the cross, walking in the strait gate, I have been made to think that the end of that command was mostly to cross myself, and therefore did the duty oft-times more as mine own prejudice and cross, rather than as commanded by God, and the mean to attain such an end (hence Heathens cut themselves, and Papists whip themselves), for this did me ill; it engendered hard thoughts of God, and made me do duties heartlessly, as likewise without success, because I sought no more than the crossing of myself.

21. In not prizing or esteeming little mercies because

common, and fear to rest in them; thus "despising the day of small things."

22. In not shunning little evils, fearing to be thereby tithing the anise and cummin.

23. Through a strong persuasion of an absolute decree in God, which yet I judge truth, and of God's sovereignty, and that "it is not of him that willeth or runneth, but of God that showeth mercy;" I have been thereby tempted to excuse my sins, to challenge God for double-dealing, have not noticed His invitations and expostulations, Rom. ix. 19, "Who hath resisted His will?" Not distinguished betwixt the nature of God, and free absolute decree of God, and operation of God; and that it is not the damnation of the wicked God ultimately and for itself intends, but the manifestation of His justice.

24. By limiting of the "Holy One of Israel:" by cutting out and prescribing to God a way of helping me; and when He hath not come in my way, as He will not, nor no reason He should, I could not imagine His coming a mercy, 2 Kings, v. 11, in Naaman. Hence, I have proposed God's way with other Christians, and there exercises, as the way to the Spirit to deal with me; and not finding this, I have been discouraged, and disquieted, and unthankful," and "spent my labour and strength in vain," in gazing after that, and labouring to walk in a path the Lord was not willing to lead me. There is a sovereignty in leading of saints to glory. I have limited the Lord in His way, by portraying to myself, and conceiving such a grace, and under such a notion and form; so that if I had not that very form and notion of it I conceived, though I had it really, yet did I not think I had it. Oh, under what various terms doth the Lord express one thing, that folk might not restrict grace to one notion!

25. In striving against the outward acts of sin, and not considering the inward corruption of the heart; in "making clean the outside of the platter," but neglecting to cleanse it within; cutting the branches, and sparing the root, Matth.

xxiii. 26, whereby I have made no profit in holiness, because the fountain hath not been cleansed.

26. Under the pretence of discretion, prudence, and patience, I have neglected the life and zeal of actions. I have reproved but darkly, in respect of prudence and discretion; I have not stressed myself in private means, under pretence of sobriety; have neglected to bring my heart to any sense of sin, under pretence of moderation. Oh, what ills lie disguised under moderation, sobriety, patience, and Christian liberty! We have a sinful patience.

27. By going on in duties in my own strength, without looking for divine assistance, which hath done me much evil. When I have gone on in the confidence of my own strength, the Lord hath plagued me for my persumption, as in Peter: when duties have been difficult, relying on and looking to mine own strength, I have been discouraged.

28. I have neglected the outward practice of repentance, under pretence that the Lord requires the heart; but we should serve the Lord both in body and in spirit. It is true, we should not rest in the outward, or mainly look thereunto, but should look to the heart mostly; yet should not the outward act be neglected.

29. By giving ear and credulously believing suggestions of sense concerning myself and interest, and concerning God, without examination. Credulity, and easiness to believe everything suggested or spoken in books, or written down there, hath prejudiced me much. Hanging my faith on men's belts, and not examining suggestions, doctrines, writings, through the line of reason and through Scripture, hath made me wander long in doubts and fears unsettledly; but since I have tried all things, and laid aside all books, and had recourse to the fountain, I have been much better.

30. By judging by outward appearances, and misbelieving of success (which hath come through not looking to God), hath much discouraged me from duty.

CHAP. VIII.

DECLARING MERCIES.

SECTION I.

Containing general mercies.

1. I FIND reason to bless the Lord for continued and perfect health, so as I never remember that I lay (except when I had the small-pox) two days' sick, either through pain or heart-sickness.

2. I have reason to bless the Lord for the mercy of good education; so that, wherever he did cast my lot, I had occasions of good given me. I saw not much wild example: and those whom I was with, the Lord did put them out to take some pains with me, which though it did not convert me, yet did prepare for it.

3. In beating me out of all my false rests, and refuges of lies; in which if I had continued, I had perished for ever. O, what a mercy, that the Lord discovered to me my condition, the vanity of duties, mine own inability to save myself, the distance and enmity betwixt God and my soul!

4. Sparing mercies. Oh, what hath the Lord borne of me! surely more than of any other whatsoever. How often did I provoke Him to send me to my place! He spared me notwithstanding of my blasphemy, my Sabbath-breaking, my palpable breaking of vows, sinning against light, backsliding, cursing even in a lie, profanity, mocking in duties, untractableness; yea, when He might have had great glory by my destruction. Who hath or could have

borne so much as the Lord? and should I not therefore love? They "love much, because much is forgiven."

5. Oh, the great pains the Lord hath taken, and the cost He hath been at with me! What pains in my first education! What pains in conversion! What pains after conversion! What pains in recovering out of backsliding! What pains by afflictions, by tentations, convictions, mercies of all sorts, waterings public and private! What a constant suitor hath he been for my heart! What day in which there hath not been some message or other! Surely He is in very good earnest with me; He hath constantly and uninterruptedly followed me.

6. In bestowing saving grace on my soul; washing me from nature, from sin, and Satan, and hell; by renewing His image on my soul; by enlightening mine eyes, quickening my dead soul, changing me quite, giving me rest; by admitting me to fellowship with Himself; by entering in a covenant with me; by taking me from my sinful ways and courses, and conforming me to His ways, in heart, speech, and practice; making an inward, blest, right, and universal change, differing from formal hypocrites and Gospel professors that are carnal.

7. In recovering me out of a backslidden estate, after-carelessness and security; departing from God, until I had ruined myself again, and was, as it were, "twice dead;" and when I was at the last gasp, He pitied me, recovered me, engaged me in His service, kept me through His power and goodness (notwithstanding of many oppositions) at this diet, until I at last recovered, and that He did set me on a "rock higher than I." Oh, what cost and expenses was my recovery to Him! He would not let me die at a distance with Him, but by afflictions and sore trials called me home.

8. Mercies in a wilderness condition. When yet but weak, how did He condescend to my weakness! Though He was "the high and lofty One," how did He bear my manners, my murmurings, my faintings, my lustings, my impatience, my dulness, my deadness, my unbelief; He

never left me for all these things, but was ever with me; He supplied all my wants, and many a time revived my fainting soul, and did carry me as an eagle doth her young ones, and "no strange god with Him" at all; He never left me until He brought me to a large land and fruitful. Oh, the care He had of me in the great wilderness, preserving me and carrying me through, was a wonderful mercy!

9. I am obliged unto the Lord for talents; that He created me not void of understanding, but hath put me in some capacity to be serviceable to Him; He hath instructed me in the wonderful things of His law, made me know the mysteries of the kingdom of God. And what shall I say? my natural abilities were very much helped and improven by grace: "Through Thy precepts I have attained to understanding."

10. I acknowledge with all thankfulness the great mercy of God in keeping me on His side in this evil day; that I have been preserved in this general apostacy; that I have mustered on His side, and under His standard, against the dragon making war in heaven against the Lamb. How many have profanity, error, vanity, formality, sloth, and worldliness destroyed, or rendered useless? yea, even tall cedars; yet me hath He kept from the destroying pestilence, yea, kept in life, and through grace privileged to be a plain witness for Him against the dragon and the courses of these times; to do some little thing, at least to show my good-will.

11. By upholding me with his visitations," innumerable times "restoring my soul" to life, preserving "my feet from falling, and mine eyes from tears." Oh the many loving refreshing visitations I had of Him, under deadness, confusions, distractions, sorrows, weights! Hence hath He been as the clear shining sun after the rain. These have been the means by which I have been kept in life; these are His favours, in these days of famine feeding me and keeping me in life.

12. In many times delivering me out of hell itself; when the sorrows of death compassed me about, when overpowered with despair, He brought me out of the great and terrible pit; and when all other means and friends failed, and neither could nor would help, the Lord Himself stepped in, and calmed all these terrible storms, when I could not bear any longer: nor was I ever in any extremity but He helped me, yea, out of great and sore troubles.

13. Mercies in afflictions. Surely "in faithfulness hath He afflicted me." It is a mercy to be taken in under His discipline, a covenant mercy; but He hath supported me in all my afflictions. And when a sign, and a wonder, and a terror to all friends and acquaintances, left of friends and relations, and ungratefully used by them, then did "the Lord take me up," and gave me shelter, meat and drink "that the world knew not of;" and what shall I say? "at last delivered me out of them all," at least out of the most pressing, and that by His own hand. He hath delivered me from all dangers, fears, snares and sorrows.

14. All these are heightened by these circumstances: 1*mo*, That the Lord hath visited me with special love, the right-hand blessings, grace, Christ, and sanctification. 2*do*, That it is the Lord Himself that is eminently seen in them; He lets none do me good but Himself, especially great deliverances; the Lord brings all about wonderfully. 3*tio*, I see them all stamped with free grace, and their motto, "Not for your sakes, but for My name's sake, and because of the Lord Jesus." I see them all proceeding from the free grace and love of Christ Jesus. 4*to*, That He hath singled me out of all my tribe and kindred, and passed by them all and chosen me for Himself. 5*to*, That the Lord is seen universally in all these things. He doth all things most excellently for me; not in one or two particulars, but in everything I have ado. "Thou, Lord, wilt ordain peace for us; for Thou hast wrought all our works in us,"

Isa. xxvi. 12. 6*to*, The Lord is constant in His kindness; it is not for a fit or start, but those whom He hath loved, He loveth to the end. His love is a constant love, He "never takes away His loving-kindness." 7*mo*, That the Lord by all mercies sanctifies me, and draws me nearer to Himself: I am made to know more of God by these; my heart is warmed in love and affection towards Him by the remembrance of these; and through experience of these I am made to come to Him, and depend on Him, and engaged to thankfulness. 8*vo*, That they are to me, who am so wild, so miserable, so sinful, who have abused His grace and mercy, and daily grieve Him, and am less than the least of all His mercies; this heightens the mercy. What am I, that the Lord should visit me? *Lastly*, Considering this, that when favours are so few, it is much in a day of indignation, much in a day of famine and confusions, when all are generally crying out, "My leanness."

SECTION II.

Of special mercies or little particular favours from the Lord, as to my spiritual condition and temporal.

As for particular mercies, they are innumerable and past reckoning, and would take up much time to tell them over, and much pains to write them down; and because I purpose to write them by themselves at large, and in respect any who read what I have written may there see many of them, I will forbear.

Thus have I run through the most remarkable circumstances of the Lord's providence towards me in my conversion, and what followed thereupon; and have been signally assisted in calling to mind, and observing the Lord's way and mind in them. And what can I say or give to the Lord for all His mercies and pains! but blessed for ever be He, that ever looked upon me, that hath done so great things for me, that hath borne with me till now, and hath given me time and strength to set down on record His kindness! O that I may walk worthy of his pains! To Him, through Christ Jesus, be glory for ever. Amen.

> "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace,
> and good-will towards men."

[*What follows was not dedicated to Mr Thomas Ross.*]

CHAP. IX.

OF MY CALL TO THE MINISTRY.

SECTION I.

The grounds upon which I judged myself called to the ministry.

1*st*, I WAS much concerned to know whether I was indeed called by the Lord to the exercise of the ministry, or whether any inclination or pressure of spirit I had thereto did proceed from my own fancy; for I can never think that any will discharge this office aright, who hath not a sense of His divine call upon his spirit, or comfortably go about the same, neither can promise himself any success therein: for such as the Lord hath not called, "nor stood in His counsel," it is threatened that they "shall not profit this people," Jer. xxiii. 32. Therefore it is of much concernment to us to be clear in this. Yet I acknowledge many are called of Christ to preach who do not know it, but fear they are not; even as many are effectually called who know not so much; and, therefore, it is that both the one and the other live less comfortably. And as many think they belong to, and have interest in, Christ, who really have none; so, many judge themselves, and are judged by others, to be true ministers of Christ, who are not, but idol ministers, never commissioned by Christ.

2*dly*, Therefore did I judge it my duty to endeavour to have my call cleared to me, and for this cause have set apart some solemn days, in which by fasting and prayer, both before I entered to the ministry and after, I have earnestly besought the Lord for light in this matter, and to clear to me whether He called me or not; and have seriously searched and meditated, and sadly thought on this subject. And the issue of all such deliberations was, that I was inclined to think, from what I could gather from God's Word or Work, that He did call me to "bear His name, to deliver from the power of Satan to God, to witness for God," that the works of the world were evil.

3*dly*, The grounds upon which I was convinced and did believe the Lord called me were: (1) That I was not now to expect audible voices from heaven in an extraordinary manner, or within us, saying, "Arise, preach the Gospel;" for, however apostles and extraordinary prophets were so called immediately, yet that such who now are called do receive it by means of men. Therefore, though I did not receive any extraordinary voice within or without, there was no reason upon that account to doubt of my call. (2) That much less was a man's own imagination or groundless fancy to be counted a call from God; for many (I say) think they are called of God, as Jer. xxiii., whom the Lord "hath not sent." (3) That any act of man doth not give a call to a minister; for ordination by ministers, or election by the people, which are the two means by which it is pretended this call is conveyed, is posterious to this call of God. And, besides, ministers may ordain, and people may elect, such as were never called of God; so, though never so regularly ordained and admitted, yet are they to be esteemed no ministers of Christ.

4*thly*, As the revelation of God's Word in all ages hath been the rule whereby to discern who have been called of God to be His servants, and who not; and therefore, when God revealed Himself immediately to His prophets, this immediate revelation published by the prophets was the ground of faith and rule of practice, so now, the revelation of God's will being committed to writ or Scripture, it hence follows, that by the Scriptures only we can know who are His ministers called of Him, and who are not; and this knowledge is as certain as any knowledge that could be had from the prophets of old, and as clear and evident; Luke xvi. 31, "If they believe not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they believe though one arise from the dead." The Scriptures, then, I must look into and by them know whether the Lord hath called me or not. The general I find in several places of Scripture; Luke xix. 13, "Occupy till I come." 1 Pet. iv. 10, "As every one hath received the gift, so let him minister unto another." 1 Cor. xii. 7, "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to profit withal." By all these Scriptures I gather, that whatever talents men have received from Christ, they are not to lie idle, nor to be kept up in a napkin, but that they are to be put in use and exercised for God. And this Scripture, "Occupy till I come," is the general warrant that ministers and all other persons of different occupations and gifts have to discharge their office. If any then inquire, What is my call to preach? I answer, Our Lord's command and call, "Occupy till I come." The word was brought to my remembrance, when I was exercised about this matter; and did not the Lord command us in His Word, no man should misimprove any talent he hath; ministers in preaching do not but occupy till Christ come. And here is my first ground.

5*thly*, By this general call, none is particularly engaged to follow the ministry but such as are qualified. For he who is fitted for an artificer, for a scholar, for a lawyer, for a physician, although he is bound by this general to employ his talent for God, yet is not every one by this Scripture bound to discharge the office of the ministry, unless he be qualified thereto. It is, therefore, further requisite to a divine call, that the person be fitted more for this than for anything else. He, therefore, who is not qualified for the ministry, hath not gifts, is not called; and he who is more fitted for this than for anything else, is called of God, because he is called to minister as he hath received, 1 Pet.

iv. 10. A man's talent is the determiner of that general, "Occupy till I come." Now I begin to see what is my talent; and truly there was no other thing I was more fitted for, or qualified, than preaching and serving God in the ministry. And though my parts were but weak, and my talent small, especially in the beginning; yet did I see some measure of qualifying, and divine preparation for this work, and truly more than for any other employment, and therefore did I judge I was bound to occupy for God in that work. Some natural endowments I had, by which I was sufficiently capable of any science, yea, of natural theology. The dealings of God with my spirit in the work of conversion were very distinct; and though I could not see but confusedly at first, yet afterwards I did see to perceive that work very distinctly. And not only so; for I judge it very needful for a minister to be converted ere he endeavour to convert others, Luke xxii. 32; Psalm li. 12, 13, "Restore the joy of thy salvation, and then will I teach transgressors thy ways." So, Isa. vi. 7, the prophet's iniquity must be taken away ere he receive his commission, and that after deep humbling in the dust. The Lord did not only, by conversion begun and renewed, fit me for the ministry; but did give me great experience of the exceeding evil of my heart, of the terrors of God, that so I might know to persuade others, 2 Cor. v. 8; as likewise opened my eyes to see the glorious mysteries of the covenant of grace, telling me something every day as it were. And truly I had not been many days in Christ's school, judging the covenant of grace, when I thought I was come to a new world; my former life seemed a dark howling wilderness, and the life of grace I looked upon as the lightsome Canaan, the harbour of rest after my tossings. Divers and various conflicts I had with unbelief, and much exercised with the law and the bond-woman seeking to get in my conscience. I was much helped by Luther on the Galatians, and Calvin's Institutions; something more by that book called the "Marrow of Modern Divinity;" by some old writers, as Fox, Bradwardin's Letters, Mr Hamilton, and Wisheart; but especially by reading the Epistle to the Romans, by prayer and meditation, by which I came to receive very much satisfaction in my mind in the Gospel. I perceived that our divinity was much altered from what it was in the primitive reformers' time. When I read Knox, Hamilton, Tindal, Luther, Calvin, Bradford, etc., I thought I saw another scheme of divinity, much more agreeable to the Scriptures and to my experience than the modern. And though I plainly enough saw the errors of the Antinomians (for their errors lay very near truth), yet I perceived a gospel spirit to be in very few, and that the most part yea of ministers did wofully confound the two covenants, and were of an Old Testament spirit; and little of the glory of Christ, grace and gospel, did shine in their writings and preaching. But I abhorred and was at enmity with Mr Baxter, as a stated enemy to the grace of God, under the cover of opposing some Antinomianism. He boldly averred what others thought and materially believed, even whilst they did speak against him; by which he was hardened in his way. Now I thought the great pains the Lord did take in this with me, the experience also I had of great afflictions and the Lord's support under them, and delivering from them, and sanctifying of the same to me by instructing me in many chief lessons by the rod; what should all this mean, said I, but that the Lord gives me experience of these things, to the end I should make this His "righteousness known in the great congregation?" If this be spoken in my ear, shall I not divulge it "on the house tops?" Luke xii. And was not all this to qualify me, and make me a fit minister of the New Testament? And this was a second consideration to clear my call to me.

6*thly*, The Lord did by His Spirit apply the general call particularly to my soul. He brought home that word, "Occupy till I come;" and dealt with me, told me that the Lord called me to "serve Him in the Gospel of His Son," and to employ what talents I had that way; was at much pains with me till I should yield. For gifts and abilities to preach and pray are not a sufficient call to a man to be a minister, though they be necessary to the call. A man's natural gift and ability for any magistracy doth not presently call him to that office; and some have gifts for divers offices that yet are called but to one. And hence it is, that a man's call to the office of the ministry is in some things different from the call of believing. For that call or command of God to believe, reaching all within the visible Church, doth oblige all thereunto, whether they do so or not, yea, whether the Spirit strive with them or not, though without this they neither shall nor can believe; but this call to the ministry, though it be in God's Word, yet it doth not oblige any particularly to the work of the ministry without the working of the Spirit. And, therefore, is the application of the Spirit, in the matter of the call to the ministry, a very necessary part and constituent of the call, and requisite not only to enable us to the thing as it is in the case of believing, but likewise to warrant that particular thing. For, however, the general call, "Occupy till I come," do warrant such as have parts and talents to employ them for God, yet doth it not warrant a godly able man to exercise his talents in a public ministerial way more than any others, until the Spirit determine his spirit. And this I found the Spirit did likewise to me: (1) In representing to my soul the beauty and glory of the office of the ministry. O to serve the Lord in this! said I; nothing is like it! To testify for God, to hold forth the "riches of Christ," to bear His name; what more honourable employment! And like as the merchant must see the pearl ere he buy it, Mat. xiii. 45, and we must "see the Son" ere we "believe in Him," so that beauty and glory of the work of the ministry must be seen ere we take with it. (2) The Lord by His Spirit did draw out and incline my heart to this work; and so many times I was taken off from other studies and exercises, and was set on this, and many times did I ardently desire it; yea, I had marvellous delight in the exercise of any work belonging to the ministry, whether it was reading of theology, either practical or polemic, meditating upon or writing my thoughts, studying or preaching of sermons. And truly parents send their children to these trades that they observe them to be most of themselves inclined to; "Send me," saith Isaiah, vi. 6. (3) By fitting, preparing, and qualifying me for that employment; by renewing a distinct work of conversion in my soul; by exercising me with various and great outward afflictions; by discovering unto me something of the mystery of grace and of the Gospel. And the more fitted I was, the more inclined to the work; and though I studied but little, yet the Lord blessed it marvellously. (4) By doing my soul good, in being exercised in preparing for the ministry. For it was by studying to preach, and meditation on several subjects, that my soul recovered out of my first backsliding; and by meditating upon subjects, and preaching of them, I daily grew in grace and knowledge of Christ.

7thly, The Lord, not only by His Spirit working inwardly upon me, but likewise by His Work, did clear that He called me. For my heart was utterly averse to any other study or employment; all attempts, designs, and endeavours to settle in any other station were crushed and broken, and matters in the world went still worse and worse, until I resolved and engaged with the work of the ministry; and from that time I observed the weather turned, and my captivity was turned back. What judgment can I make of the Lord's barring all other doors, and His opening of this, but that I should go in here, and look to no other thing?

8thly, I am much confirmed in my call to the ministry by that providence of the vows I made to this purpose, that I should be drawn out to make such a vow; that the Lord should so soon testify His approbation thereof, and answer me so suddenly, so clearly, so fully, and so particularly and suitably to my vow in all things. For my want of assurance was my great doubt, and that which made me afraid to engage with the ministry; whereupon I vowed solemnly, that if the Lord should clear up my interest to me, and reveal the mystery of the Gospel, covenant of grace, and faith to me, I should then apply myself to the ministry, provided the Lord did answer this in five years. But the Lord in less than six weeks answered it; for in a month or thereabout did the Lord convince me of faith, called me to believe, opened His covenant to me, never left me till I believed it, and thereafter sealed it with the spirit of assurance. And in my vow I said, that if the Lord would hearken to me, in clearing of these things, I would look on it as an evident token He called me to serve Him in the Gospel.

9*thly*, About the latter end of the year 1665, I remember the Lord put this call close to my door, told me I was to be His witness, to testify for Him against the world, to do all the good I could to mankind wherever I was called; and that I should make this my only work, and be faithful, free, and full in it; that many things needed reformation, and that the Lord would employ me in it. This was pressed much on me; and because I refused, and like Jonah, fled from the Lord, He sent a storm of terrors after me, and I was casten into a sea and depth of hell many weeks. The work I was called to was so hard, that I durst not undertake it, but delayed it.

10*thly*, Another consideration that cleared my call to me was, that the ministers and faithful servants of Jesus Christ did solemnly examine my call, and after trial of my gifts and conversation by several exercises and pieces of trial recommended me, being intimately and of a long time acquainted with me, having preached frequently in their hearing, and having given proof of my gifts, were so far satisfied with me, that unanimously, without the least censure, they agreed to trust me in the name of Christ with the dispensation of the Gospel; and this was in the year 1672. They were better judges than myself, and they found the Lord had called me, and therefore did in the name of Christ declaratively empower me to exercise the office of the ministry.

Lastly, When I consider the effects which followed on my admission to the ministry, I am much confirmed in my call; for by preaching and discharging my duty otherwise, I myself was watered, my gifts increased, more of the Lord's will was manifested and made known to me, and my labours were blessed to many, to whose heart and case the Lord made me many times to speak. And though, while I was in Scotland, I never received nor would take a sixpence for preaching, but lived upon what was my own; yet I prospered much in my outward estate in the world, I cleared my debts, I reserved some part of my estate to my debts, and maintained myself; I married all my sisters, insomuch that in fourteen years I was better by eight or nine hundred pounds sterling than when I began, although there was never a week but I preached twice and sometimes oftener. And this I looked upon as a token of the Lord's acceptance of my labours.

SECTION II.

Of a Minister's work and qualification.

1*st*, It was not merely to show or discover my gifts, by letting people know what I could say from a text of Scripture, that I was called; I had great inclinations of myself to preach and speak from Scripture. Nor was it to baptize or minister sacraments, nor was it the name or title of a minister that I was to take on, or which I did effect most; God did not send me to baptise but to preach. But that which I was called to was, to testify for God, to hold forth His name and ways to the dark world, and to deliver poor captives of Satan, and bring them to the "glorious liberty of the sons of God." This was I to make my only employment, to give myself to, and therein to be diligent, taking all occasions; and to be plain, full, and free in this charge. I was called to enter in hot war with the world and sinners, to fight by my testimony against them for God. This was it I was called unto, and unto a conversation suitable thereunto, and to "take up the cross daily and follow Christ." I was called to be a watchman, and to take the charge of the care of all my relations and acquaintances; to be a watchman over and keeper of them, and to be free and faithful in this with every one, and my own soul to lie at the stake to be forfeit if I failed; and this commission might have been discharged, though I had never taken a text or preached formally, Acts ix. 15; Rev. x.; John vii. 7; Acts xx. 18; Luke v. 10, and 2 Tim. ii. 19.

2dly, This being the minister's work and employment, the means and ways by which he is to discharge this commission, and execute the end of his calling, are: (1) By public preaching, holding forth their sin and misery to men, and the remedy Christ Jesus, and persuading to be reconciled, 2 Co., v. 21. Mat. xxviii., "Go disciples, to all nations, preaching to them; preach the Gospel to every creature under heaven." By this means they publish their commission, and "seek obedience to the faith," in all the world, Rom. i. 5. And this they should do "in season and out of season," and in dependence on God both for what to say and a blessing, should say nothing but what they "have received from the Lord Jesus," and of which Christ should be the Alpha and Omega. (2) He is to discharge his office by praying for such as are committed to his charge, and that both publicly and privately, affectionately and fervently. You see Paul doth not cease to make mention of churches in his prayers. They are priests to God, who not only make supplication for themselves but for others. It is true, every Christian is bound to pray for the whole Church of Christ, and for the members especially to which Himself is related; but a minister is in a special manner bound. He who doth not water his labours with affectionate prayers and tears, I doubt that he shall labour successfully. (3) Hs is to execute his commission by exhortation, private and occasional instruction, whether for reproof, comfort or information and direction. And this is it which I suppose

I was most called unto, viz., to take all occasions with all persons in private discourse to make the name of Christ known, and to do them good, and to do this as my only work; and to do it boldly, and faithfully, and fully. And this to do is very hard in a right and effectual manner; to do this is harder than to preach publicly; and to be strengthened, directed, and encouraged in this is that for which I ought to live near in a dependence on Christ, "without whom we can do nothing," and of whom is all our sufficiency. In preaching, there are a great many whom we cannot reach, and there are many to whom we have no occassion to preach publicly; we may thus preach always, and speak more successfully than in public, where the greatest part of hearers do not understand the minister though he speak never so plainly. This likewise we are called unto this day, seeing we are by force incapacitate; but Oh, how is this neglected! Were ministers faithful in this, we should quickly see a change in affairs; but, alas! with grief of heart I speak it, it is in this thing that I challenge myself most of any; it is in this that I have most come short, and I suppose it may be so with others too. The apostles went from house to house. (4) The fourth mean by which we are called to dicharge the office of the ministry is by a godly conversation; hereby we glorify God, and preach most effectually to others. Example is very powerful; and where this is not, preaching and other labours are in vain; for without this the most seriously delivered sermons are nothing in effect but a well-acted stage-play, 1 Thess. ii. 10. This was it that made the apostles' preaching so efficacious to the Thessalonians, that they perceived them to be of very holy conversation. "Ye know what manner of men we were for your sakes." They illustrated by their practice as by example what they preached. All are bound to be holy, but ministers much more; and their godly conversation is one of the ways they preach, and which many times doth convert, 1 Pet. iii. 2; some, not gained by the Word, are gained by the conversation of their wives or their believing relations. (5) They may discharge their commission by writing of epistles or treatises as the Lord shall call or enable them, and especially when there is no access to other means. Thus the Apostle Paul did write when in prison, or when he could not get to them. Many breathings are lost for neglect of this, saith Mr Shepherd. To all these five things I found myself called.

3*dly*, As to the nature of my particular call to preach the Gospel, by ought I can discern through the moving of God's Spirit, or the encouragement I had thereto, it was not to preach to any particular flock, gathered or ungathered; but it was to preach to the whole world, especially my relations and acquaintances. My commission was much of the nature of that man's, Mark iv., "Go and show thy friends what God hath done for thee." The Lord then had scattered both shepherds and flocks; we were then to preach wherever we could find people. Yea, though I had three calls from three different societies of Christians, yet did I not incline to fix with any, Mark xvi. My commission, I thought was rather indefinate than definate; "Preach the Gospel to every creature under heaven." (2) And hence I was called to preach in a vagrant manner, sometimes to one place, sometimes to another, here and there, up and down the country, as I was called by the people, not staying above a week in one place. So at Edinburgh, where my family was, where once every weekday, if at home, I preached a sermon, and on the Lord's day. I loved not fixed stipends and pulpits, while the Lord Jesus Himself was unfixed; but thought it most kindly to follow the wandering ark and tabernacle. (3) The chief things I was called to preach and declare were, man's misery by nature, the nature of regeneration and salvation by Christ, Ezek. xx. 4; Micah iii. 8; and my spirit did more freely go out in a gospel-strain than in a legal. I never in my sermons reflected upon the persons of rulers or councils; neither laboured to stir up the people, nor did I insist ordinarily upon public differences. But though I did sometimes (the Lord putting it in my mind and mouth) preach against the ungodly ministers the curates, the particular duties of the times, yet were the substantial truths of religion the more ordinary subject of my discourses, and it was "Christ and Him crucified" that I was mostly called to preach. (4) I was called (I say) more to preach by private exhortation than by public formal preaching; and to endeavour the conversion of some and edification of others by transient occasional discourses. And in the discharge of this I found more peace of conscience, greater sweetness and profit, than by preaching of many sermons; yet in this I was most defective, and to it had least inclination. I found a private exhortation and instruction, transiently and occasionally given, do more good than many sermons. And private exhortation is preaching, and hath the advantage of public preaching, especially at this time, in this regard, that there is more self-denial, less carnal vain ends in it, than in public preaching; in this occasional preaching, by way of transient discourse, we have occasion given us to make what we say plain, and beat it upon them, and hear what they say. *Lastly*, we can do this without breach of law. We cannot do the other without undergoing great suffering, and in hazard to be frustrated; and the Lord, by the prevalency of the laws against these more formal preachings, seems to call us to see what private discourses may do. (5) I was called to preach plainly, particularly, and authoritatively, as the messenger of Jesus Christ, with all sorts of persons; yet courteously, wisely, meekly, and gently; not to speak in a cloud of general words, but "Thou art the man," to reach home; nor yet to speak lightly or slightly, but seriously and gravely, that it may be reverenced and regarded by those to whom it is directed. For both we should speak what we say, and they hear as the Word of God; yet withal wisely and meekly, shuning to give irritation. (6) I was called to "serve God in the Gospel of His Son" as my only and great work, to make this my trade and calling, in which only, diligently, "in season and out of season," to be employed; and to take no other thing in hand, but wholly to be given to this. "Give thyself wholly to these things," saith the Apostle to Timothy. Acts vi. 4, "We will give ourselves to the Word and prayer." They would not so much as look to the distribution of supply to the poor, lest it should divert them from their function in the Word. (7) And that I might the better discharge my office and confute adversaries, I was called to read some, and meditate on what I read. (8) To discharge the work of my calling in a special dependence on God for light, life, assistance, wisdom, and a blessing. No calling, no work under heaven, wherein there is more need of dependence on God than the work of the ministry. Alas! we know neither what to say nor how to say, "We are not sufficient for these things, but our sufficiency is of God." Nor ought we to speak anything but as the Lord giveth utterance. By this I perceive it is not every person, yea, every Christian or saint, that is a fit and qualified person for the ministry; they must be "polished shafts." Right interpreters are rare persons, "One of a thousand," Job xxxiii. 23. Nay, very few of those who are called of men are called of God to the ministry: for (1), Ministers must be persons of good parts and endowments, able to convince and put to silence adversaries; they must have knowledge and learning more than others. (2) They must be saints and Christians ere they be ministers; for how shall Satan cast out Satan? What do all gifts profit if a man want grace or charity? Is he not as a "tinkling cymbal?" How shall such persuade others, who themselves never "knew the terrors of the Lord?" Shall they tell others the way to heaven, that never themselves travelled that way? Is not this for "the blind to lead the blind?" Can a blessing be expected on the labours of such? I do not say that grace is essential to the ministry, but appearance of grace and serious profession is needful; and it is necessary to the *bene esse* of a minister.

(3) He must have a more than ordinary stock and measure of grace, of knowledge, patience, zeal, experience, sobriety, watchfulness, faith; he cannot without this be "one of a thousand." He must be one acquainted in some measure with Satan's devices, and with the corners of the little world the heart. (4) A godly, heavenly, pure and spiritual conversation and behaviour, to illustrate what he delivers in preaching, to exemplify a godly life, is a clear confirmation of a minister's doctrine; and if it do not convert them, yet still it will convince them. And when the conversation is contrary, or short of the doctrine preached, that man "destroyeth what he buildeth"—he unpreacheth and confutes what he preaches, and gives occasion to people to think religion a stage-play. (5) The minister must have the sense of his charge, the danger of immortal souls deeply imprinted on his heart; it must be clear to him, that the Lord hath called him, and to what he is called, and the weight and import of his charge. It is a matter of life and death; hence the charge of prophesying, committed to the prophets, is called a burden. He that hath but slight impressions of his charge will never faithfully discharge it. (6) He must love and take pleasure in his work, be reconciled thereto. He must not only be convinced that such a work is incumbent upon him, and be some way sufficient for the discharge of it; but his heart must lie to it, he must have a will to it, else his work is not accepted; "With good-will doing the work of the Lord;" God "meeteth him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness." He that doth not so will not continue long in it; hence there must be a desire of the office of a bishop. Paul was affectionately desirous of the Thessalonians, and was "straitened in spirit" till he had discharged his commission; "Gladly willing to spend and be spent for you." (7) He must be a prudent man; "Be ye wise as serpents," Matth. x., "Being cunning, I caught you with guile; he that winneth souls is wise." There is a divine wisdom and prudence in "fishing of men" for Christ. (8) He must be a tender-hearted man, ready to

sympathise with all that are in affliction, either inward or outward, 1 Thess. ii. 7; be as a nurse to them. Compassion puts ministers to do much for the souls of people, and when people see the compassion of ministers, it takes much with them. (9) They must always live near God, and depend on Him for wisdom, courage, and success; they must be, with Moses, much in the mount. (10) They must be bold courageous men, men of great zeal for God, "not afraid of the faces of men," but "set their faces as a flint." (11) Humble persons, "bearing with much meekness and long-suffering those that are out of the way," 2 Tim. ii. 25. Of all these qualifications I had some small measure, of some more, of some less, but of none what I ought to have.

SECTION III.

Observations and instructions from the aforesaid narration.

The office of the ministry is an honourable employment. What a trust and an honour hath the Lord been pleased to confer on me, that He hath intrusted me with the charge of souls, and to be His ambassador, and witness, and apostle or messenger, "for obedience to the faith among all nations." "Unto me is this grace given, that I should preach the unsearchable riches of Christ." (2) I perceive that I am bound to another kind of life than the rest of the world, to be holy in another manner than they; that, as the Lord hath set me in a more eminent place, so I should be more eminent in holiness, adorning the Gospel: they that "bear the vessels of the Lord's" house ought themselves to be holy in a special manner. (3) A minister's work and charge is very weighty; they are placed in the very front of the battle against the devil and the world, to "declare the whole counsel of God" to them; and they stake their souls for security of their faithful discharge of their duty. (4) Of all sorts of persons in the world, they have greatest need of dependence upon Christ for light and strength; for their work is far above their abilities, and therefore are they constantly to have their eyes to the Lord for daily supplies according to their need. (5) I find I have great reason to be humbled for my shortcomings in several things; as, 1*st*, That I have never been so sensibly affected with the great charge the Lord hath put (and I have condescended to take) upon me. 2*dly*, In that I have not applied myself wholly to these things, nor given myself to word and prayer as my only work. How much of my time hath been spent in not discharging any part of my duty? 3*dly*, I have been sadly entangled with the affairs of this life, and my heart is so taken up with them, that I had but little heart to my charge; at least I could not wholly look to these things. 4*thly*, I have not had that tenderness towards perishing souls, nor such sense of God's presence and matters I have been speaking of. 5*thly*, I have not so depended for counsel, direction, strength, and a blessing from God: I have spoken in my own wisdom too much, and have had not things so purely from God. 6*thly*, The duty of particular exhortation much slighted: many means, as private conference, writing of letters towards saving and edifying of souls, have been neglected. 7*thly*, My conversation hath not been so shining and convincing as became a minister. 8*thly*, I was many times timorous and bashful, when I should boldly have appeared against sin and for God. For these, with many sinful defects, I desire to mourn and be humbled before the Lord, and to seek mercy through the blood of Jesus Christ.

But, however, I have great cause to be humbled for many sinful defects I have been sensibly convinced of, and to flee to the Lord Jesus' blood shed for the remission of sins for pardoning grace; yet I have the Lord to bless, and have great peace and comfort, for not a few things that through His grace I have attained: (1) That the Lord hath so far honoured me, as to call me to serve Him in the Gospel of His Son, who was educated and placed in another station in the world, and designed by my parents and friends for another business. (2) That the Lord was at such pains, by converting me once and again, by sore spiritual conflicts and exercises, desertions, lifting up and casting down, afflictions, persecutions, death of relations, temptations, and trials, to qualify me in some measure for the ministry, and that for several years before I entered thereunto. (3) That the Lord did so wonderfully bless the little endeavours I used, and pains I took, for increasing my knowledge, improving my parts and gifts. (4) That I am in some measure not only called, but convinced of my call, to the ministry. (5) That I durst never preach anything to others, but what I had some experience of in my own spirit; that I had myself walked in that way that I directed others to walk in; that I never gave a mark or sign of grace, but what I could say I found in myself; that I never started doubts, or endeavoured to loose them, but by these means and medicines the Lord's Spirit had formerly proposed and loosed them to myself; I only delivered what I received from the Lord Jesus. (6) That the Lord not only commissionated me to preach and *cry*, but directed me always *what* to cry ere I preached. Every sermon I preached, I had it with some warmness and life from the Lord upon my own spirit; and I durst never preach that sermon that I was not in some measure affected with in studying before I preached it. (7) That I never undertook the office of the ministry for filthy lucre's sake in the least, refusing money for the space of twelve years, so that I had not a farthing from any upon that or any other account during all that time, but wholly maintained myself with my own estate; nor yet mostly or altogether from pride or vain-glory, but was desirous of the office to honour and serve Christ therein, and likewise to do all the good I could to poor sinners. (8) That my labours were not altogether in vain, but much accepted with gracious persons and others, and efficacious to not a few; and my repute was amongst the best, and honoured more both at home and abroad than I desired or deserved. Common people did repute me and love me, because I spoke to their capacities, and used similitudes; those that were more knowing had me in esteem, because I was full master of whatsoever I spoke; and many liked me because I spoke of things that were little touched by others, viz, the difference betwixt law and gospel, freedom and absoluteness of the covenant, and some peculiar notions I had, which the most part did relish, but some again did so far mistake as to think I was a setter-forth of new opinions. (9) That I was in some measure endued with all the qualifications needful to a minister, though I had but a small degree of some of them. (10) That my gifts, parts, and graces sensibly increased, yea, and outward estate in the world, since I entered upon the work of the ministry. (11) That as I sensibly found my own weakness and insufficiency to do ought for the Lord, so I have as sensibly found the immediate supply of the Spirit of Grace enabling to discharge the duty of my calling in a gracious and comfortable manner. (12) I bless the Lord, whatever were my shortcomings and failings, I never dishonoured my calling by any scandalous sin; my conversation was truly, in some measure at least, suitable to my office. (13) That I was always on the Lord Jesus' side, and opposite to the dragon and his party. (14) That He gave me to suffer for His truth, as well as to preach His truth; and that all the malice of adversaries did never make me change in principle, or comply in the least with them.

A ministerial call is God's command in His Word to such as He hath gifted for that employment to serve Him in the Gospel, applied by the Spirit to the heart inwardly, and found and declared to be such by such as He hath appointed for that purpose, and received for that effect by His Church. (2) The subject of this power is the Lord Jesus, from whom he receives it; but the Church, consisting of spiritual officers and professed believers, are the instruments of application; the one by election, by which he is made minister of such a people; and the other by appointment or ordination. It is from Christ that all true ministers have their commission: but the Lord Jesus, the only chief bishop, appoints servants to see His commission; and, in case they discern it to be from Christ, are to publish the same. (3) It would seem that ministers ordaining and solemnly appointing a person to the work of the ministry is much declarative of what Christ doth principally; as it is with an ambassador or herald who denounces war, it is his master who doth it, he but ministerially publishes and declares it, and at most he doth but instrumentally and ministerially denounce war. (4) Yet are not ministerial acts of preaching, ordaining, excommunicating, mere idle declarations, but have an instrumental causality, and are efficacious, producing effects; and hence we hear tell of "hewing by the prophets," and of "the sword of Elisha, which should slay;" Jeremiah is "as fire," and the people "as wood to be consumed." (5) Yet it is not this by virtue of any natural, innate causality in the word preached, or other ordinance dispensed; but the Lord doth make use of the minister's declaration (for in itself it is no more) as a passive mean to do His will by; as a channel is said to convey the water into the sea, though it cannot put forth any active efficacy thereunto. (6) In some cases ministers have authority to preach, either by election or ordination. The want of any of these doth not annul a minister's office, the Lord conferring the power sometimes by ordination as the channel, and sometimes by election. Ordination, I think, makes a minister; or the Lord by laying on the hands of the presbytery, doth confer a right to preach, and make a minister: and the election of a people doth make a man their minister. (7) As every Christian, who is baptized in any particular church, is baptized in the universal Catholic Church, and therefore hath right to a visible fellowship with it in all privileges; so he who is ordained a minister, is a minister of the universal Catholic Church, and may exercise ministerial acts in any place of the world, may preach and administer the sacraments, and the like. (8) I suppose, therefore, the practice of indefinite ordination is very warrantable, that is, of ordaining a minister, though not to any particular charge, especially *ecclesia constituenda*, or *turbata*, where ministers cannot stay in one place, and where the universal confusion of the Church doth call for help. In a constitute settled church, elders indeed are appointed in every city; for so the first ministers, apostles, seventy disciples, evangelists, were ordained; so Mr Wisheart, Tindal, Bradford, Mr Patrick Hamilton, and most of our extraordinary first reformers. (9) No unqualified person, that is, no scandalous person, no ignorant or profane man, who is not able in some measure to convince the adversary, can be counted a minister in the court of heaven or of men; for God never calls such in His Word to preach, whom He hath not some way fitted for the work; nor doth the Spirit of Christ apply this call to any but to such as are qualified. And if men call any who visibly appear not to be so qualified, as they may, and also too frequently do, it is *clave errante;* this unqualified, so ordained, is no minister, more than a woman ordained is to be esteemed a minister of Christ: for the same law, that discharges and interdicts the one, interdicts the other. (10) The office and acts of such, as ordination and baptism, though in themselves null, yet they are effectual to godly persons, to whom their "uncircumcision becomes circumcision;" and, therefore, are not necessary to be retracted. The same I say of Popish priests, who are not ministers of Christ; the ordinances dispensed by them are all in themselves null, yet, to such as observe the law of circumcision, their "uncircumcision becomes circumcision:" and, consequently, a Popish priest turning orthodox, and renouncing the great whore, and all antichristian authority, there is no need he be re-ordained. (11) As there is no necessity of the re-ordination of such, nor of the re-baptizing of such as Popish priests or wicked scandalous ministers do baptize; so, I think, the one may be re-ordained, and the other in case of scruple may be re-baptized. (12) There is no true ministry nor true ordinance of Jesus Christ in the Popish Church, nor salvation in it as such. That work and employment, which the Lord doth call us to, is ordinarily that which we find our corrupt natures have most aversion to, and therefore most difficult; for Satan will stir up the greatest opposition thereunto, as we see in Moses and Jeremiah. Therefore that part of the ministry your hearts have greatest aversion to, and seek most to shift, is that to which you are mostly called. (2) As the foundation and ground of our call to believe on Christ is God's Word, making it our duty to believe; so the ground and call of a person to the ministry is no other than God's Word, such as this, "Occupy till I come; every one, wherein he is called, let him walk with God." (3) Such as God calls to preach now, are not called to preach immediately. Much less doth the call of God to preach actually constitute them ministers; for then were they ministers before they were ordained or elected. But he is called to preach in such a manner, method, and order, that is, by the ordination and election of the Church; God will have His power to be conveyed to him in such a channel. He will have him indeed preach, but He will first have his gift and call tried; and when the servants of Christ have found the Lord to have called him, they are authoritatively in the name of Christ to enjoin him to the exercise of his gift, and to publish the same to the people. (4) Ministers ordinarily have great aversion to the work of the ministry, it being a difficult work, and a work above the strength of flesh and blood, and exposing to the hatred of all men. And such who find greatest insufficiency in themselves, and are most sensible of their wants, are truly called of God; as Jeremiah, who cried he was a *child*. (5) Therefore doth the Lord with the very office, or short time thereafter, bestow qualities and endowments fitting them for the service: as it is said of Saul, that the Lord did "give him a new heart" when He made him a king; the Lord many times in the very time of ordination, and thereafter, gives greater measure of grace and gifts to His servant. I cannot say but I found a sensible increase of knowledge, gifts, and graces, from the very time of my setting out, although in the very act of ordination I did not find these gifts sensibly in me, or did not find such a change. There is something of this therefore in that expression, "The gift that was given thee by laying on of the hands of the presbytery." Some never find the furniture till they be engaged in the work; increase of gifts and graces therefore is a sign of God's call to the ministry, and seal thereof.

The Lord calls to and employs men in the work of the ministry, whom He never calls effectually to be saints. He makes many in some measure meet for the ministry, and useful to the Church, who were never made meet for the kingdom of heaven, else Christ would never have called Judas to be an apostle; although such usually discharge their office neither so successfully, painfully, or comfortably, and, I am sure, never acceptably. (2) Though hypocrites and reprobates, whom the Lord Jesus doth make use of in the Church, may be true and lawful ministers, yet cannot it be instanced that the Lord Jesus in Old or New Testament did ever commission a scandalous, insufficient, or unqualified person, or one known to be a hypocrite, to serve Him. (3) I many times found, that when I thought I was most enlarged, and most sensibly assisted, either in preaching, or conference, or prayer, I have done least good, there have not been such fruits; and on the contrary, when I found greatest deadness and straitness in my spirit in ministerial exercises, I found I have done most good: to show we should not trust in ourselves, but in the Lord, in Whom alone is the blessing, and of Whom alone is the efficacy of ordinances; and to encourage ministers under indispositions, and "out of season," to be always doing; for they may do most good when they think themselves least fitted for any such thing. (4) Sometimes, in the distempers of Spirit, I have said, I will retire and mend my nets, and for some time "hear what the Lord will say to me," and not open my mouth to speak to others. I have then found it never worse with me, and my corruptions and my confusions to grow stronger upon me; so that I have been forced to alter my resolutions, and appear in public; and by studying of preachings, and by preaching of them, I have sensibly found a cure of my spiritual distempers. Nor, next to prayer, do I find anything more quickening than studying a sermon, and endeavouring after a preaching frame, and to hear what God would have me to say. (5) Before I engaged with the office of the ministry, I was engaged in a multiplicity of affairs, entangled and burdened with great debts on my father's account, and several intricacies, which made me for some time delay my entering into the ministry. But, when I delayed, matters grew worse; and, since I resolved, the Lord hath been pleased to deliver me out of all my intricacies, so as I may, without being burdensome to any, or great distraction, attend upon my work, which is a very great encouragement to me. (6) I many times am employed in business for others, against my will truly; but ordinarily nothing that I meddle in of others' concernments, if it be a civil business, doth prosper; and yet I prosper in all my own affairs, except when I am excessively and unseasonably taken up. (7) As discharging of my duty faithfully is my generation's work; so I look upon my great neglect and omissions of, and slightness in, this work of the ministry, to be, as it were, my only evil, the foundation of any breaches in my soul. Here, when I reform, must I begun. (8) I seldom preach as I ought, or to my own contentment, but after sermons see need of fleeing unto the blood of sprinkling for pardon, and before this altar to mourn, grieve, and be humbled, and seek to preach better and more holily, and to be under a greater sense of what I preach, and whose words I preach, and of those to whom I speak. (9) I find multiplicity of points, though counted material preaching and quick speaking, not so refreshful to my soul, or profiting to others, as a few points well pressed and insisted upon, and gravely and slowly delivered. And therefore of late I used but slow delivery, and a few points. (10) I can speak with better utterance in prayer than in preaching. (11) I usually, especially when in a good frame, use many similitudes. (12) God doth not call all to the ministry in a like manner: as some, and ordinarily most, are very unwilling to undertake the charge, and therefore must be "thrust out," as the word is; so others do express more willingness, readiness, and inclination to it. Hence some are said to "desire the office of a bishop;" and Isaiah saith, "Send me," and offers himself to go; whereas Moses and Jeremiah are hardly brought over. (13) Ordinarily, before a minister's closing with the work of the ministry, there is an exercising of the person with great and various tentations, and regeneration (as one calls it), that the person, as it were, passes under a new work of conversion, of conviction of sin, and pardon and justification intimated unto his conscience, without which a gracious soul will be very loath to engage in such a work. So Isaiah was really humbled under a sense of guilt, and made to cry out, until by a comfortable voice he be assured that his iniquity is pardoned and himself justified. (14) There is not only need of a gift and endowment to preach, but great need of the actual breathing of the Spirit to stir up and excite the gift that is in them; without which, though the Lord has been pleased to give some small measure of talents, yet can they not preach more than a child. (15) To draw souls to, and build them up in Christ Jesus, is and ought to be the great end and scope of all faithful ministers. Christ is the Alpha and Omega of preaching, He is the centre where all the lines ought to meet; and, where Christ is not the sense and life of preaching, we lose the text. (16) No secret or mystery is more needful, and a minister should be versed in or acquainted with, than the depth of the covenant of grace, Christ and faith, the promises and the law.

CHAP. X.

OF MY MARRIAGE, AND THE LORD'S PROVIDENCES TOWARDS ME DURING THE TIME OF MY MARRIAGE, WHICH WAS IN THE YEAR 1672, AND FOR SOME TIME THEREAFTER.

AT that time the Church of Christ had great rest and liberty from persecution through variance amongst the statesmen, and preachers were frequent, yea, the curates were beginning to leave their pulpits. I was as busy as I could amongst others, and in August had gone North, and despatched some business there; the most was to take course with some debts. I returned South, but a violent persecution had broken out, and then there began to be fining, imprisoning, taking, and summoning of persons, disturbing of conventicles with soldiers. But yet the Gospel prevailed more and more, and we were like the "Israelites in Egypt, the more we were afflicted, the more we grew and multiplied." Some hot-heads were for taking the sword, and redeeming of themselves from the hands of oppressors; at least I had ground to fear it: but I opposed rising in arms all I could, and preached against it, and exhorted them to patience and courageous using of the sword of the Spirit; and I did not see they had any call to the sword, that their "strength was to sit still." And if they did stir and take the sword, they would therewith perish; but if they patiently suffered and endured, God would Himself either incline to pity, or some other way support and deliver them. I had influence with the people, being popular; and whilst I was at liberty, I did what I could to keep the people peaceable. The truth is, there were great provocations given, so that we conclude it was the design of some rulers to stir us up that we might fall. Ministers still preached and laboured amongst the people, conventicles increased, many were brought in; the Work of God in the midst of persecution did always prosper, until we destroyed ourselves, first by needless divisions and difference in opinion happening by reason of the Indulgence, and thereafter by rash and unwarrantable taking up of arms most unseasonably in the year 1679; when the dissenting party, a good number of them meeting at a conventicle to worship God, being assaulted by armed men, and defending of themselves, did kill about thirty men of their enemies. With this success both engaged and heartened, great numbers gathered together, but not in the Lord's strength; and there, by their unseasonable divisions, and folly of some, they were made a prey to their enemies, as is fully known. The persecution became so hot in the latter end of the year 1674, and beginning of 1675, and always after that, that sometimes I was in hazard to be taken preaching. It was then I was intercommuned, with some other ministers, gentlemen, and women, yea, some persons of quality; but the Lord suffered not this ball, though it hit me, to do me harm. The Gospel still spread, and the people of all sorts ventured on converse with intercommuned persons. O let "my soul bless the Lord, and not be forgetful of His benefits; let me not conceal His loving-kindnesses, but show them to the sons of men." Although the Lord afflicted me, and kept the cross still upon my back, as I said; yet did He likewise remember mercy, His mercies were "renewed every morning" to me. And 1*st*, the Lord showed His mercy to me, in giving me a comfortable and suitable yoke-fellow, who did me good and not evil all the days of her life. In her did I behold as in a glass the Lord's love to me, by her were the sorrows of my pilgrimage many times sweetened, and she made me frequently forget my sorrows and griefs, and was the greatest tentation to me of saying, "It is good for me to be here;" so that I can seal to the truth of that, "An inheritance is from the fathers, but a good prudent wife is from the Lord, and whoso findeth her obtaineth favour of the Lord." I had not in herself alone a comfortable relation, but I had very much love and respect from all her relations, which were many, and in whose sight I found favour, that they considered me no longer as a stranger but as their brother, and there was nothing but in what I could command them; and many of them being lawyers, advocates, clerks, and judges, I had their service for nought, and glad were they to do me any good; by them I obtained several things, and warded off several blows. Nor did their love die with her, but continued constant to this day, as ready to pleasure and do for me now as ever; nor know I so much as of any one breach that ever was betwixt us. She was kindly—"the law of kindness was in her mouth;" she was prudent and well-bred, ordered her affairs with great discretion, and by her wisdom and activity did many things that were fair and lovely to look on; was truly religious, and not only would comply with me in any good work and spiritual duty, but many times would assist, stir up, and encourage and remember me of my duty. *2dly*, I found much preserving mercy from the Lord. I was in great debts when I married; some considerable sums of money was I bound in, others I was not bound in, but yet were truly owing, but was not able to pay them, being my father's debt. Had those creditors fallen then upon me whiles I was yet tender, they might have undone me, made my life and my wife's very uncomfortable to me; but such as I was owing to, the Lord was pleased to restrain, that they did not process for their money until I was able to pay them; nor did others stir at all of my creditors, though I had fears they might arrest money belonging to my wife, her interest at least; yet none ever moved. Some tried to do something by law, but I prevailed against them; and my cause seemed so just to the judges, that they could not harm me; so that they agreed with me on what terms I pleased, which was, to pay them what and when I was able, and how

I was able. Likewise, 3*dly*, The Lord was so gracious to us, as although I had no gainful employment, nor ever received a sixpence for preaching whilst in Scotland, nor a gift from any relation or friend, that yet, by the blessing of the Lord on our management, I discharged a great burden of debt without wronging my estate a sixpence. In that four years and a half's time, I cleared seven or eight hundred pounds sterling of debt, which by several obligations I was owing to several persons, and did settle a debt, which betwixt principal and annual rent amounted to eight hundred pounds, for two hundred. My own estate was not above one hundred, my mother and public duties had yearly thirty-five or forty pounds of it, it was not all well paid; I had with my wife sixty-five pounds annuity, besides one hundred pounds of stock; but it is true we got in above five hundred pounds of a desperate debt we looked not for. 4*thly*, I looked on it as a piece of great mercy, that I had by my marriage better and greater occasions of serving the Lord and His people in the service of the Gospel; for living for the most part in the South with my wife, I had frequent calls to preach both in the cities and country, so that few weeks passed that I did not preach twice a Lord's day, and once every week besides, and sometimes much ofter, and always to great multitudes, to several hundreds in the cities and thousands in the country, being much followed where they knew me: there was not such a door opened in the North. 5*thly*, I increased in grace, knowledge, and gifts, while married, both by exercising my talents faithfully, and having the opportunity of hearing the best gifted men in Scotland, by whom I profited both as a Christian and as a minister, and likewise by providences of mercy and judgment shown me. 6*thly*, Many experiences had I of the Lord's goodness in delivering me out of great straits, as in sparing my wife to me when in great straits and at the gates of death, twice in delivering me from the hands of the enemies; though intercommuned, yet thereby received no damage; though sought out to be imprisoned, yet was hid;

and when such as intended to apprehend me were come in where I was preaching, three several times was I preserved from them wonderfully; money likewise to supply wants, and credit was cast in to me wonderfully. Especially at two several times, when, if a great sum had not been gotten, I might have been broken, and my friends with me; but the Lord lent it me, in stirring up some of whom I did not expect it at all, without any motion of mine, to offer money freely to me, and more than would do my turn. I had likewise experiences of the Lord's hearing of my prayer very remarkably. And, finally, the Lord, was pleased to bless me with children; and I bless the Lord, He helped me in some measure to carry Christianly in a married relation, making conscience of private duties, having sometimes very sweet and heart-refreshing fellowship betwixt me and my wife alone, seeing and feeling much of the Lord's goodness vented to me whiles in that relation, doing nothing, and watching against what might stain my credit or authority either as a minister or a Christian, being preserved from gross pollutions through the mercy of the Lord. And yet I desire to be humbled, to the justifying of God, and abasing of myself, for great shortcomings and failings of which I was both in the time and since convinced; as (1) I was not so useful and profitable to my wife, family, and relations, as I should and might have been; many an opportunity had I which I nowise improved; I cannot tell if any of them hath got good by me; I was not as the dew to them. (2) I was not spiritual but very carnal in the use and enjoyment of lawful comforts; had many times a sensual carnal frame, and designed no spiritual end therein. I did not, "wherein I was called," walk so closely with the Lord as I should and might. (3) I was by the pleasures and satisfaction I found in a married condition turned off in my affections and longings after heaven, and now I began to see a greater good on earth than before, and was in my heart saying, "It is good to be here;" my heart was glued to sublunary enjoyments, and much taken off Christ. (4) I did sometimes perform family-duty but slighty, and on haste neglect and omit the same sometimes, and omitted reading, and speaking from the Word, and catechising; yea, and omitted many occasions of spiritual fellowship with my wife, although the time spent that way, and our fellowship that way, was the sweetest part of our married life.

CHAP. XI.

OF MY WIDOWHOOD, AND THE LORD'S PROVIDENCES DURING THAT TIME; TOGETHER WITH OBSERVATIONS UPON MY MARRIAGE AND WIDOWHOOD.

AND now there was an end put to my earthly joys, my sun of earthly prosperity was set, and my nights and "days of darkness," and "the years wherein I have had no pleasure in them," were come; our sun must be overclouded sometimes. Four years and a quarter did I live in a married condition, "rejoicing with the wife of my youth" in the days of my vanity, that is, from the latter end of July 1672, to the latter end of October 1676, at which time must I be a widower: for then did the Lord, who "gave, take away" from me "the delight of mine eyes," and with her all earthly joys.

I cannot say but the Lord gave me some warning of this before it came to pass. I was threatened in the year 1673 with this, but the Lord spared her for that time, but it was a mere suspension. Likewise that summer before she died, I was then in the North to settle some affairs; but a sudden damp was upon my spirit, by which my spirit was overwhelmed with an unknown load of sorrow, and continued for the space of two whole days. I hardly during that time could speak, eat, or drink, nor knew I any cause for it; as it came without any cause, so within two days it wore off my spirit again. Now, these clouds upon my spirit are always forerunners of a sharp and bitter storm to blow upon me. The sense I many times had of my sinful course of life, my shortcoming, my distance with God, my not improving the mercies that God gave me, did many times, with some impression upon my spirit, presage the evil day a-coming; yea, the extraordinary light and warmness of my sun did tell me always before a shower; for truly the goodness of the Lord to me was my tentation to fear. How frequently have I said to myself, "O how do I fear the prosperity of fools may destroy me!" I perceive all the people of God that I know visited with sorrow upon sorrow; I see lamentation in the "tabernacles of Jacob," only I have peace, increase in riches, children; have therewith peace and quietness, respect from others, and what not? Oh, surely, if the Lord loves me, if I be not a bastard, a stranger that hath no lot or part with the people of God, surely I shall not be suffered to walk in a world alone, but shall mourn with Zion; this world shall not hold. Thus did I many times commune with my own soul, and, as Job said, "I was not at peace" nor quietness, "yet trouble came;" and "the evil I greatly feared was come upon me." Either if the Lord loves me (said I), God will send some painful sickness or blast upon my estate, or I shall fall into the hands of the ungodly, or my wife shall be taken from me; some awakening or other I shall have, that I know. And, accordingly, in the beginning of October 1676, having a call to Northumberland in order to do something (which after I enquired the Lord, I was free to do), my wife sickened of a fever, and some eight or nine days thereafter she died, in vain calling for me during a great part of the time of sickness, who was then some fifty or sixty miles from her, and knew nothing. Letters were sent to me, but came too late, only a day before she died; and, having made what haste I could after I once understood she was sick, I came and found her dead some four hours before. I indeed remember I was, when absent at that time, stirred up extraordinarily to mind her in prayer; and about the very time she was a dying, an extraordinary cloud of horror seized upon me, being then within twelve miles of my journey to our own house.

Observations upon my marriage and widowhood.

It is good for either man or woman to be first married and engaged with Christ ere they be engaged with any other, otherwise we shall never carry well in a marriage state. When once the heart hath made its choice, it is hardly brought to choose Christ; and therefore our days of youth are days of choice, in which we are to "remember our Creator," Eccl. xii. 1. The Lord was merciful to me, in engaging me with Christ ere I settled any other way, Mat. vi. ult., "Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven." (2) It is not convenient, I think, that people not come to the years of discretion should marry; I was thirty-two years of age when I married, and needed all the wisdom and experience that by age I acquired to manage a married lot. (3) As in all our ways we should acknowledge the Lord, so especially in going about marriage, that we may marry "in the Lord." For many years before I had thoughts of marriage, I earnestly besought the Lord, that if ever I should change my relation and manner of living, He would give me a comfortable yoke-fellow. And when the Lord opened a door, I durst not so much as make a visit without prayer; and I set a whole day apart before I did propose marriage to my wife, to know the Lord's mind whether I should go on or not, and to seek His blessing in case I should see it of the Lord to go on. (4) The great end of marriage is to get a "meet help" for furthering of the soul's condition and spiritual concernment. We are not therefore to match ourselves any way but such as may be conducible to that end; other ends and advantages are to be subordinate to this. (5) Therefore doth it much concern us that the person we marry be a prudent, pious, and virtuous person; fools or graceless persons we can never expect to be helpful to us this way; it is dreadful to take a lump of wrath in our bosom. He that marrieth a prudent, godly woman is sure to have the Lord Himself to his father-in-law. The seed of the woman and of the serpent can never agree, dwell, and walk together: nor can an ox and an ass, yoked together, draw equally. (6) It is absolutely necessary that those we marry be persons of good moral parts, and especially that they be not of a cross but good humour naturally, and that they have some good measure of prudence; without these two you cannot live comfortably. Yea, grace, though I confess it makes fools (even naturally so) wiser, and makes the rugged lions eat grass like oxen, yet it doth not destroy nature; and if there be not the stricter watch, it will vent, and cause disorders in the family. That we live religiously and to God, we owe it to grace; but that, as men and women we live in external peace and comfortably, is much from prudence and good natural humour. (7) It is a marvellous and a blessed thing where God is pleased to unite in the bonds of love first those He in His providence is pleased to join in marriage. This is the blessing of the Lord upon a marriage condition; this is it which makes the married walk faithfully, in sweet spiritual communion with God, in joint spiritual duties and exercises, and which makes it so comfortable; and this I found by experience. I found much sweetness in spiritual fellowship with my wife; the pleasantest time we ever had was these few hours we spent together in prayer, in reading the Word, and the making of observable things out of it, in spiritual conference, and joint binding of ourselves to the Lord, in all which I found her very cordial; nor can I say I found fellowship with any other so sweet as with her. What a great advantage is it, and how necessary, to be united by love with these with whom we join in fellowship! (8) Grace makes persons not only good Christians but good in all relations. To say, a good woman, but a bad wife; a gracious man, but a mighty cross, peevish, sullen husband; a holy man, but a wonderfully bad master or undutiful servant, is that which I truly think cannot be. And however some have very confidently endeavoured to make it out to me by several instances, yet truly, whatever may be truth in it, I could never yet see through or understand how it could be. (9) Marriage is one of the most important steps of a man's life: O then, with what fear, and trembling, and godly dependence, should we go about such a matter! I shall never forget what a minister said when marrying two certain persons, viz., That repentance mends all things but an ill-made marriage: it is either a mean of the greatest comfort or sorrow. (10) If any person be uncomfortably yoked, they may through grace be profitably yoked. To marry an ill, cross and rugged person is indeed grievous: but it may be and has been blessed of God as the mean of greatest good. Thus I thought I was thereby encouraged against terrible effects of a bad choice; well, said I, if I fall not well, sure I am I shall thereby have the best opportunity and advantage to be mortified to the world that ever I had, and an ill wife may do that good for me which all my former afflictions could not do. (11) I have observed that several gracious persons have been very unequally yoked with graceless persons, and that to be the sad lot rather of poor women than of men, and yet this hath been blessed of God to them, and they helped to carry well under it. (12) A marriage condition or state is both a blessed and comfortable state, and also a state liable to many inconveniences; I found this fountain to "send forth bitter and sweet." As it was a life of much contentment, and as I saw much of the love and goodness of God, so did I see the same seasoned with many ingredients, cares, and vexing fears, that I never found in a single state; so that if I were absent for four or five days, it was a terror to me to enter into the family, lest I should hear or know that either wife or children were unwell. (13) Although marriage be ordained for preventing of fornication and burning lust, 1 Cor. vii. 4, and for begetting of children to furnish the Church with an holy seed, yet are they not the only great ends of marriage; for aged persons that cannot get children, and such as never found these violent desires, may lawfully marry, and that for the great end of marriage, which is to have a suitable help, a suitable companion, who may in our pilgrimage be comfortable to us, and help us in our way to heaven. (14) Although increase of wealth or paying of debts be the ordinary great end of marriage, with continuance of our names, yet do I think it the meanest of ends. And just it is (as ordinary) with God to make the marriage of such uncomfortable, and to deprive them of the true comforts and blessings thereof, who have their eyes so much thereupon. This I may say, riches were not my aim, having preferred her whom I have married to several with greater portions, and in other things not inferior to her save only in virtue and piety. (15) It is a very hard thing to guide a marriage lot, and to walk prudently and in knowledge, to keep such a spiritual frame as to possess our vessels in holiness, and, like Enoch, to beget sons and daughters, and walk with God. Alas! I know not how to walk perfectly "in a perfect way," or how to behave wisely in my house. I many times omitted opportunities of doing good, slighted others; many times slightly and perfunctoriously went about family duties, was carnal and excessive, was foolish in many things; yea, the comforts of a present life, wife, children, and relations, did blunt my desire after heaven, and I began to say in my heart, "It is good to be here." (16) Over-valued comforts are shortened, and a worm comes and consumes them, so that they wither to the ground. (17) Loss of comforts is as bitter, yea, much more than ever they were comfortable when enjoyed. As I much comforted myself in such a comfortable yoke-fellow, so it was exceeding bitter when the Lord withered such a gourd, Jonah iv. 6, 7. (18) Mercies obtained by, and received as the fruit of prayer, are double mercies. What was comfortable and useful to me in a yoke-fellow I obtained by prayer. (19) I think it a greater sin to marry on the Lord's day than to yoke a plough, inasmuch as the work and concern is greater; and I judge it to be one of the provoking profanations of the Lord's day, the sinful continuance of this; and I seldom ever see these marriages blessed that were celebrated on that day. They must be strangely mortified creatures that do not "find their own pleasures that day." I never durst do or advise to it. I am hardly free for ministers to marry persons; to give them exhortations, and to seek a blessing upon them I think very commendable; but to minister in the action, ceremony and rite, which is the badge of that relation, I think it is more competent to him, than to give a sasine in land. Yet, as times go now, I think it not altogether unlawful to marry by a minister; but it were to be wished this and other things were reformed, which, as they are relics of Popery, so do they tend to beget in us an opinion of marriage being a sacrament, seeing ministers only administer it; and commonly people think, that if ministers do not marry them, that they are not married at all. And this likewise begets the marrying on the Lord's day, seeing they take it for some spiritual action, performable only by ministers. Other things I might observe, but, fearing tediousness, I here end this chapter.

CHAP. XII.

OF MY SUFFERINGS.

SECTION I.

Of my public sufferings in general.

IT pleased the Lord, not only to exercise me with personal afflictions, but likewise for purging away and healing of my corruptions, for trial and exercise of my faith, patience, and sincerity, for humbling of me, and for manifesting His purity and holiness, and for confirmation and sealing of God's truth and ways, to honour me with public sufferings for His name; by being reproached, oppressed, and wronged, intercommuned, troubled with citations before courts on that account, wandering from place to place many times for fear of my life, imprisoned, fined, and banished, and threatened with death itself.

The cause and occasions of my sufferings was, dissenting from, and noncomformity to, the government of prelacy in the Church; for not coming to church to hear such ministers and officers as did officiate by an unlawful (to me) authority; for adhering to the persecuted, deserted party, who stood upon their former ground, cleaving to their former principles; and for taking upon me to preach without the bishop's authority. This, in short time, exposed me to the last of the laws against dissenters, and malice of the bishops, whose principles, ways, courses, and office, I was convinced were not of God, and by instinct was adverse to. For as to any other thing, whether immorality or sedition, I could not be charged therewith, being as to man unblameable, of sufficiently loyal principles, and kept from having hand in our concurrence with any public insurrection that was; so that there was nothing that could be laid to my charge but as concerning my God and conscience.

It is true, the very profession of religion did expose me to persecution, viz., to reproach and contempt, and made me not willing to bring my cause to their corrupt judicatories, choosing rather to suffer by unprofitable terms of peace, than to bring my cause before them to be heard publicly; for I knew both my person and principles were unfavourable, and therefore doubted much of the issue of my cause.

Hitherto my troubles reached none but myself; but now, being married, they reached others: for within a very few days after we were married, and were preparing to go to the North, a messenger came with a summons to me to appear before the council for keeping of conventicles. The Bishop of Murray, in whose diocy I had preached, and a privy counsellor, for some picque he had at my wife, did cause me this trouble. I was herewith troubled; but my wife's friends, to whom I communicated the matter, dealt with the messenger to take of his summons, and to lay on a new summons when we were to the North, where we were to be in a day or two, and then indorse on the back of his execution, that he found us not, which would make a new summons necessary; and he did so. My adversaries were enraged at this, and, disdaining to be thus outwitted, caused send one hundred and sixty miles a new summons, which, within two months after we were come North, came to our hand. I was therewith much troubled on my wife's account, fearing that the public would seize upon anything belonging to her; however, I prayed to the Lord, and sought advice what to do, whether I should answer the council's citation (as my friends advised me) or not, and take my hazard. The Lord was pleased to clear it to me, that I was not to answer the citation, which light I followed; upon which I was denounced and outlawed. My wife was very cheerful under this. Within a short time thereafter we came South; and then, understanding who were the authors of my troubles, I thought it wisdom to take them off; and, for this effect, employed such as had greatest influence with the privy counsellor to deal with him to abstain from such a matter and action so far below him. I likewise came myself and spoke to him; and the Lord blessed the means used so effectually, that he fell off, putting all the blame on the bishop, and was ever thereafter a good friend to me; and having the executions delivered him, he would never give them up, by which means they came to nothing, and, finally, were altogether forgotten.

After this there was "silence in heaven for half an hour," but then the angels of war did sound their trumpets; and amongst other ministers was I sought for, and of new denounced; was many times, while in the South, made to shift my lodging; was frequently in fears and alarms, and preached in great tentations through the lying in wait of enemies; was several times interrupted in the very act of preaching by soldiers that by orders came to apprehend me; I could get no business done. The Lord by this did only manifest His goodness in preserving and delivering me, rendering enemies who did forbid us to preach inexcusable, by this causing them fill up the measure of their iniquities; my spirit by these tossings was rather distempered and jumbled than bettered.

SECTION II.

Of my being intercommuned.

The bishops, and other wicked men, perceiving all this time that they "laboured in the fire," for the number of dissenters increased, and the Gospel spread further and further notwithstanding of all the violent means that were used for suppressing it and the professors thereof, they bethink themselves of intercommuning the chief ministers that were most active in preaching, and the chief professors both gentlemen and others, to the number of between three or four hundred in the first or second intercommuning. It was a public writ, served by king and council's authority, straitly discharging, under highest pains, all his majesty's subjects to converse or speak with, harbour or receive into their houses, or administer any comfort to, the persons in the writ particularly expressed. This was proclaimed and printed; and thus for naked preaching were we processed as murderers and traitors, for such were only in use to be intercommuned. They thought this would keep the people from us, or force us, finding no shelter, to remove out of the land; and make us as ducks to decoy others, who, could they be proven to have received or harboured us, were fineable at the council's pleasure, and to be in the same circumstances which we were in ourselves. I was, through the malice of the bishops, put in with others, for they knew that I was against the very hearing of their ministers, and had several times preached in the fields, and was very popular; they imagined also my parts were greater than they were. And, therefore, though some friends dealt that I might not be intercommuned, yet could not prevail; the bishops would have it so.

Although this seemed to be the first storm of persecution that yet had fallen upon us, and that now the adversaries had boasted of an effectual mean for suppressing conventicles, and establishing prelacy and uniformity, and that good people feared it; yet the Lord did wonderfully disappoint them, and made and turned their witty counsels into folly; for this great noise harmed not at all, it was powder without ball: for, as for myself, never one that cared for me shunned my company; yea, a great many more carnal relations and acquaintances did entertain me as freely as ever they did; yea, so far did the goodness of the Lord turn this to my good, that I observed it was at that time I got most of my civil business expede. And as the Lord preserved myself in this storm, so I did not hear of any intercommuned, or conversers with intercommuned persons, that were in the least prejudiced thereby; nay, this matter of the intercommuning of so many good and peaceable men did but exasperate the people against the bishops the more, and procured to them, as the authors of such rigid courses, a greater and more universal hatred; so that the whole land groaned to be delivered from them.

SECTION III.

Of my first imprisonment in the Bass.

Some two years and a half did I continue intercommuned discharging the commission I had received from the Lord Jesus in great weakness, I confess (yet desiring to serve the Lord better, and humbled and grieved upon the account of my great failing), and in manifold tentations through the lying in wait of these who hunted after me. For the bishops knowing that I was a rigid nonconformist, who had not freedom to have any spiritual communion with their church, and that I laboured to keep some halting betwixt two opinions from joining with them, and to divert others from their (supposed by me) most sinful communion; and imagining me to be of some parts, and very active in preaching in the fields, and keeping up the Secession as they called it; they therefore did stir up the king's council against me, representing me to them as a person of very disloyal principles and practices; so as there was a particular eye upon me, and I was one of the three that a considerable sum of money was proffered for apprehending of, to any person, although nothing could be laid to my charge of sedition or insurrection, but only that I preached without the bishop's authority, and had influence to keep such of the nation as I had influence upon, or conversed with from going alongst or joining with the public courses established by law. Many attempts were made against me, which for some years I escaped: at last the major of the town of Edinburgh, being solicited by the archbishop, and encouraged and importuned thereto by the promises of great rewards and acknowledgments, did on the Lord's day night, being the 28th January 1677, by the treachery of a servant-maid whom for money he had corrupted, who, being a servant-maid to a relation in whose house I ordinarily preached, had knowledge of my coming and going; thus betrayed, I was apprehended by the said major about ten o'clock at night, which was the time the maid had appointed him to come to her master's house where I was for that day, as I was, after supper, recommending the house and family to God by prayer; I was then interrupted and carried to prison. I did not think fit to resist, lest some friends and relations which were with me might be made to suffer.

He who apprehended me went immediately to the archbishop and told him the news of my apprehension, with which the archbishop was greatly rejoiced, and by giving some small token at present, and promises of greater reward, dismissed the major. The archbishop, overjoyed with his imaginary success and prosperity in apprehending me, longed for the next day impatiently, on which, so soon as it did dawn, he (being a counsellor) sent order to the jailor that I should be kept close, and none suffered to have access to me; which was done, until some of the counsellors in a committee met the same night, before whom at five o'clock at night I appeared, where I was examined, and verbally charged as a seditious person, who did rent the Church of Christ, and was very active to make and keep up the schism; as a preacher in field conventicles, which was death by the law; which they gladly would have me acknowledge, as likewise who they were that empowered me to preach: that I was intercommuned, and despised the law so far as I never made any application to be freed from that sentence: and that I was a person of very bad principles, destructive to all government. And thereupon the archbishop, who thereby thought to ensnare me by my own words, inquired, Whether I judged it lawful upon pretence of religion to take up arms against the king's majesty? This was the sum: and that I kept correspondence with some prisoners in the Bass, which the archbishop confidently averred he knew. These things were not charged upon me all at once, but in a confused way; and many things by way of question. I cannot say of any of the committee of the council but they were all civil and sober persons, of whom, if the instigation and fear of the archbishop had not prevailed with them, I might have been moderately dealt with: but he did, in a bitter invective oration, represent me as a very odious and criminal person to the other counsellors, and aggravated my alleged crimes vehemently. To all which I replied, That I did acknowledge I was (though most unworthy) a minister of the Gospel; and that I indeed preached frequently, as the Lord called me, and independently on the bishop: that the subjects of my discourses and sermons were not disloyal and traitorous principles and assertions, as the archbishop did allege, but, according as I was helped, I preached "repentance towards God, and faith towards Jesus Christ," and no other thing than what was contained in the Prophets and the New Testament: that I was so far from being terrified or ashamed to own that I was a minister of Christ, that although I was of no despicable extraction, yet that I gloried most in, and counted it the greatest honour I ever attained, to "serve God in the Gospel of His Son:" that I never preached nor stirred up the people to sedition, and was indifferent though the principles of my heart were as visible and perceptible to their Lordships as the external lineaments and tracts of my face, so as they might read what was engraven upon my heart: that for rising up in arms against the king upon pretext or pretence of religion, which the archbishop alleged I maintained, I told him he was therein abused by his inferiors; for I never knew of any, even the most zealous asserters of the liberties of the people, that did maintain rising in arms upon pretence of religion, pretences giving no ground or warrant for any man's action: that matters of prerogative and privileges were things of a ticklish and thorny nature, and of which for the present I desired not to give my thoughts, not judging the same within my sphere now, nor called to meddle with: that, for such as did ordain me, I was not free to tell them, lest thereby I should bring others to trouble, although I should be most free as to matters concerning myself: that as I judged it not unlawful to preach the Gospel either in houses or fields as conveniency did offer, but duty, and an ordinance of Christ's (so far was I from judging those meetings "rendezvouses of rebellion," as the archbishop termed them), so did I not acknowledge I at any time did preach in the fields; and if they thirsted after my life, to take it away upon that account, they could not expect I should give or reach the weapon wherewith to destroy myself, or that I should be either witness or accuser against myself in a matter the law had made so criminal; and, therefore, for them to seek their proof and evidence elsewhere than from myself, for I was resolved none living should be able to make me guilty of such a weakness: that as for correspondence with any in the Bass, which the archbishop alleged, I declared, that notwithstanding the bishop's bold and confident asserting the contrary, there was no such thing; and, if there were, I should be content to suffer the severest punishments: I denied the charge of schism, and left it to be proven by the bishop: that for my intercommuning, I was then sevenscore miles off when it was passed, and knew not of it, till I saw my name in the printed papers, and so could not prevent it; and, after I was intercommuned, I could not get any person that would so much as draw a petition up for me, being strictly charged to the contrary; and that from this, and fear of futher prejudice, and not from the contempt of the law, it was that I did not move to have myself taken out of the letters of intercommuning. In this and in all the premises I was free and ingenuous with them; that I came not to justify my breeding before their Lordships, for I acknowledged I was a rude man (for one of the Lords challenged me of unmannerliness and ill-breeding, that gave not the archbishop his titles.) And, finally, That I was now in their Lordships' power, and ready to submit to whatsoever their Lordships should determine concerning me.

After this I was remanded to prison again, but ordered to be kept more straitly than formerly: for my pockets were searched for letters, knives; ink, paper, and pen, were taken and kept from me; all company discharged: which filled me with some melancholy apprehensions. But in my darkness was the Lord a light round about me; Him they could not shut out from me: for that night did I get a most kindly and comfortable visit from the Lord Jesus, and I had one of the most sweet nights I had for ten years before that; and lifted up, by the sense of the Lord's love and favour, above death, sin, hell, wrath, prelates, and Papists, about one or two o'clock in the morning I fell in a sound sleep, until a little before six o'clock, I was awakened by one of the jailors, who cried to me to make myself ready against six o'clock to go to the Bass, for so the council had determined: which I very cheerfully obeyed; and so, with another person that was prisoner with me, was I by a guard of twelve horse and thirty foot convoyed to the Bass, where we safely landed upon Wednesday morning (being one night by the way), and were delivered to the custody of the officer of that place, who commanded as governor therein a garrison of some eighteen or twenty soldiers.

The Bass is a very high rock in the sea, two miles distant from the nearest point of the land which is south of it; covered it is with grass on the uppermost parts thereof, where is a garden where herbs grow, with some cherry trees, of the fruit of which I several times tasted. Below which garden there is a chapel for divine service; but in regard no minister was allowed for it, the ammunition of the garrison was kept therein. Landing here is very difficult and dangerous, for, if any storm blow, ye cannot enter because of the violence of the swelling waves, which beat with a wonderful noise upon the rock, and sometimes in such a violent manner, that the broken waves, reverberating on the rock with a mighty force, have come up over the walls of the garrison on the court before the prisoners' chambers, which is above twenty cubits height: and with a full sea must you land; or, if it be ebb, you must be either cranned up, or climb with hands and feet up some steps artificially made on the rock, and must have help besides of those who are on the top of the rock, who pull you up by the hand. Nor is there any place of landing but one about the whole rock, which is of circumference some three quarters of a mile: here you may land in a fair day and full sea without great hazard, the rest of it on every side being so high and steep. Only, on the south side thereof the rock falls a little level, where you ascend several steps till you come to the governor's house, and from that some steps higher you ascend to a level court, where a house for prisoners and soldiers is; whence likewise, by windings cut out of the rock, there is a path leading you to the top of the rock, whose height doth bear off all north, east, and west storms, lying open only to the south: and on the uppermost parts of the rock their is grass sufficient to feed twenty or twenty-four sheep, which are there very fat and good. In these uppermost parts of the rock were sundry walks of some threescore foot length, and some very solitary, where we sometimes entertained ourselves. The accessible places were defended with several walls and cannon placed on them, which compassed only the south parts. The rest of the rock, is defended by nature, by the huge height and steepness of the rock, being some forty cubits high in the lowest place. It was a part of a country gentleman's inheritance, which falling from hand to hand and changing many masters, it was at last bought by the king, who repaired the old houses and walls, and built some new houses for prisoners; and a garrison of twenty or twenty-four soldiers therein are sufficient, if courageous, to defend it from millions of men, and only expugnable by hunger. It is commanded by a lieutenant, who does reap thereby some considerable profit, which, besides his pay, may be one hundred pounds a year and better. There is no fountain-water therein, and they are only served with rain that falls out of the clouds, and is preserved in some hollow caverns digged out of the rock. Their drink and provisions are carried from the other side by a boat, which only waits on the garrison, and hath a salary of six pounds yearly for keeping up the same, besides what they get of those persons that come either to see the prisoners, or are curious to see the garrison. Here fowls of several sorts are to be found, which build in the clefts of the rock, the most considerable of which is the Solan-goose, whose young, well fledged, ready to fly, are taken, and so yield near one hundred pounds yearly, and might be much more were they carefully improved.

To this melancholy place I came, and continued there in prison for two years and a half; for I came in January 1677, and came out in July 1679. And here I had likewise experience of the goodness of God towards me; and (1), In providing for me, without being chargeable to any for such things as I stood in need of. (2) In preserving and supporting me under great pressures of spirit from sin, sufferings, tentations, griefs, sorrows, and untenderness of brethren and friends so as I was not therewith overwhelmed. (3) In preserving me in health all that time. (4) That in this time, partly by selling household-plenishing and improving of my estate, I paid and cleared one hundred pounds of debts. (5) I had the comfort and edification of fellow-prisoners, both ministers and others, some there before me, and others brought in since my coming, whose company was sweet and edifying many times to me. (6) We had liberty, for the most part, of taking the air up the hill; my solitary walks were sometimes very pleasant to me. (7) I had the comfort of friends that came in kindness to see us from the city and country. (8) I had some special visits from God, ordinarily in private duties, and sometimes in worshipping and conference with others. (9) Some increase (I think) I found in gifts, knowledge, and grace; some further discoveries of the knowledge of Christ and the Gospel I never had before. (10) I was made some way useful by writing of letters abroad, praying with, and preaching to, and conference with others. (11) And that I had a cleanly unexpected deliverance from this sad place. (12) Some improvement I made of this price that was put in my hand through grace that helped me: this I think I was bound to take notice of, and be thankful for to the Lord.

As for my exercises here, and improvement of my time; I judged, when I first came here, that I was called to some work and improvement of this price put in my hand: and therefore did I (1), Exercise myself in lamenting my sins, and misspent life, and great shortcoming. (2) I laboured after, and desired some further knowledge of God and Christ and grace, and to glorify God in my sufferings. Some hours, morning and evening and mid-day, I spent in meditation, in praising, in reading the Scripture, for keeping up and increasing communion with God, and increase of grace, and this constantly; besides several fast-days, which were my sweetest seasons and best times. (4) Every day I read the Scriptures, exhorted and taught therefrom, did sing Psalms, and prayed with such of our society as our masters did allow and permit to worship God together, and this two times a day. (5) I studied Hebrew and Greek, and gained some knowledge in these Oriental languages. (6) I likewise read some divinity, and wrote a Treatise of Faith, with some other miscellanies, and several letters to Christian friends and relations. Thus I spent my time, and not without some fruit.

But prisons must be prisons, and all afflictions, though never so well sweetened, will be in some measure grievous. Though the Lord was pleased to "stay his rough wind in the day of his east wind," and to put a very light yoke upon our necks; yet was it still a yoke, and some bitter ingredients were mixed in this cup, something of the gall and vinegar we found, both that the Lord might discover and manifest to the world the cruel and unclean nature of the spirit of prelacy, and that our patience and faith might be the better exercised, and our faithfulness to Christ, and, finally, to wean us from the world, and sweeten to us the love of God in supporting under such troubles and delivering us out of them. For (1), It could not be but sad to me and my brethren to think that we were cast out of the vineyard, and become useless, our commission taken from us, and could not glorify God as we had done. (2) Absence from natural and civil relations and friends was bitter, whose company was sweet, and which now we could not enjoy. Now we might say, "Lover and friend hast thou removed from us," Psalm lxxxviii. ult. (3) The company of the ungodly, to whose hands we were delivered, and who ruled over us, who knew nothing of God, but were enemies to Him, was grievous; that we lived among lions, wolves, and serpents, and dwelt in the tents of Kedar. (4) It was then the "days of old, when the candle of God shined upon our tabernacle, when my wife, children, and relations were about me; when I went with the multitude that kept holy days:" then (I say) did these things of old come and assault my remembrance with a sensible affecting grief. (5) Our own servants were turned out from us, and we made to seek servants whom we knew not; but this turned to our good and great advantage. (6) The great comfort that we had in worshipping of God together, and in eating together, was taken away from us by the folly and fears of some, and envy and malice of others, who grudged us this comfort, and who ruled us, and made us separate in worship and diet, and would not suffer us to come together, whereby our expenses were much increased, and we deprived of the benefit of the variety of gifts. (7) Our letters that came to us, or were sent by us, were all looked many times, though they had no orders for it. (8) Our drink was dear and exceeding bad, and we behoved to take it from our governors, and pay exorbitantly for it. (9) Sometimes, when they would take it in their heads, they would shut us all close up, and not suffer any of us to speak to another, and this not only without, but contrary to the council's orders, who committed us free prisoners, and to have the liberty of the rock. This unwarranted restraint did sometimes afflict us, but our patience overcame it. (10) They vexed us by mixing in our company, and there blaspheming sometimes; and other times seeking to ensnare us by the words of our lips, and tabling discourse of public matters, which, seeing their malicious ends, we shunned. (11) They laboured to debauch our servant-maids, the governor's son offering ten shillings to a soldier if he could get such a person with child who served some of us, of purpose to reflect upon us, and which he effected, and was thereupon by the soldier challenged for his promise; insomuch that we could hardly get a servant-maid to wait upon us. (12) They by force and power kept the poor soldiers and others from conversing with or hearing us on the Lord's day, although the poor creatures would gladly have heard us. (13) At the same time, likewise, I was very untenderly handled by some false brethren engaged in the same public cause with ourselves. (14) We were sometimes in winter and spring very hardly put to it for want of victuals and drink, insomuch that we had no other than snow water or corrupted water sprinkled over with a little oatmeal to drink, and some dry fish. These with other things made our lives something, and at some times, bitter to us.

We continued thus some of us two years and a half. While the archbishop lived, no intermission or mediation of friends could get me out, although several means were tried, which all proved ineffectual, the council not accepting the engagements I would give, which were no other than compearing when called; and I refusing their terms, which were, that I should not preach in the fields any more, and that I should live peaceable and orderly according to law. Yet the Lord was pleased to answer my mind in some measure, that I should come out and be delivered, and that by giving great liberty and freedom to pray for it, and, assuring and filling my soul with the hopes and faith of it although for a great while I could not pray for my deliverance. At another time the Lord was pleased to renew my commission to preach the Gospel, even a year before I was delivered, which made me think and write to my friends that I should be delivered. And, *lastly*, I was made (from Jonah ii. ult., "And God spake to the fish, and it vomited Jonah on the dry land") to believe that the Lord would speak to this rock to give me with others of my brethren up; and, accordingly, when the fulness of the time came, I was delivered, even then when we all judged it most desperate; "at evening it was light." For after the unhappy, rash, and unadvised attempts at Bothwell of some well-meaning people for recovering of their liberties, and shaking off the yoke of prelacy, and that our strength was broken and gone, such of us as were prisoners expecting every day when we should be brought out to be a sacrifice to the fury they were then in; behold, at that time did the Lord incline the heart of the king (out of what design we cannot certainly tell) to grant an Indulgence, and withal to command and order that such prisoners as were not in accession to the late rebellion should be set at liberty, or who were sentenced merely for nonconformity. Upon which we were taken out of the Bass, and carried, to the number of eight or nine of us, to the Tolbooth of Edinburgh; for though the king's orders did require we should be freely set at liberty, yet would not the council let us go until we gave security to appear when called, under the penalty of five hundred and sixty pounds. There were about fourteen of us prisoners at the time, and in twenty-four hours' space we found security for eight hundred pounds; for we would not give obligement not to rise in arms, nor to forbear field-meetings, because we saw no law for it, and because it was conceived by us dishonourable, and to reflect upon our ministry. Forth we came, and were set at liberty, to the joy of our friends; and, while at liberty, I preached once every Lord's day, lived a wandering unsettled life. Whatever family I came to, I laboured to be something useful there. I looked to my affairs, paid two thousand merks of debts at that time, and so continued until November 1681, that I with my cautioners were cited to appear before the council for preaching, as afterwards ye shall hear.

SECTION IV.

Of my second imprisonment in Edinburgh and Blackness.

Now begun persecution to increase and wax hot against Dissenters; some ministers were taken and sent to the Bass; the liberty the king had given for preaching, partly because it was not universally accepted but by some contemned, and partly by the prelates' persuasion, was recalled by the king. And when they had gotten us to forbear meetings in fields in hope of liberty to meet in houses, the king, who gave his indulgence but during pleasure recalled and discharged his grant, and ordained the execution of the laws against Dissenters; and we, being out of the road of field-meetings, could never fall into it again. But though we did forbear field-conventicles, when once they had got us from that, they drove us from house-conventicles too. The Duke of York, being then in Scotland, did much concur with the prelates against Dissenters, so that never one of us that ever appeared had any favour shown to us; and Dissenters were as much put to it as ever. Being South, as I returned I preached in a barn, to a good number of people on a Lord's day. The council got word of this, and it was informed against me that I preached in the fields, so that orders were given to cite me and my surety both to appear before the council; but being informed better, and perceiving it was only a house-conventicle, their citation slept, and only spoke to my cautioner who was there, and who, short while thereafter, coming

North, found me lying sick of an ague; and told me how matters went, and that he was purposed to write to the Bishop of Edinburgh and the Lord Advocate concerning my case, and that I was very sick: which I earnestly dissuaded him from; for, I said, If the prelates hear I am sick, they will certainly cause cite me, in hopes that either I cannot appear, being sick, and so fall in the forfeiture of my bond of five hundred and sixty pounds, which they would gladly be in hands with; or if I would appear, I might thereby endanger my life. This, indeed, I thought; but my surety would not be counselled by me, but acquainted the bishop of my sickness, and that I preached not in the fields. The bishop no sooner received this letter, and by which he understood of my sickness, but incontinently he revives the citation, his brother being clerk to the council. Some prejudice they had at my surety, a gentleman of good estate, and who was judged something whiggish; for he had been engaged in one thousand seven hundred pounds sterling for nonconformist ministers, and besides was of a name very odious to some great men. They thought (as was supposed) I would not appear, being sick, and the day of my appearance in the very dead time of winter, the twenty-second of December, upon which they would cause my surety forfeit his bond. A citation was directed North, of which we heard word about the beginning of November, and did think fit to prevent the same. Many of my friends counselled me rather to forfeit the money than to go, for both they and myself had some apprehensions that the council intended to have my life; for it was a time wherein the council was in a very bad humour, and at the very same time had found Lord Argyll guilty of treason for that which truly to us, that knew not the law, seemed to have no affinity therewith, and to some of the chief lawyers of note likewise. Moreover, I knew that preaching in the fields was death by the law to the minister; and that the law declared, That if any person stood without to hear, though the minister and body of the people were within doors, that such a meeting was a field-meeting; and it was impossible for me to hinder or know when persons were without, and I thought it hard to shut doors upon them, and had not freedom to do it. And besides all this, I was informed some notes of my sermon were in the council's hands, and thereupon intended to stage me and process me criminally; and I knew not what they might make of popular discourses, though never so honestly meant. All these things made myself and friends have some fear of the danger of my life; but notwithstanding, getting my head above the fear of death and power of men, I resolved upon all hazards, and to venture to appear; and I was much encouraged in this by my sudden and unexpected recovery (and that without any means) of an ague that I kept but six weeks in all. I not only recovered, but was so strengthened, that I durst undertake a journey of such a length and so bad way in the midst of winter; and truly I found the Lord so gracious, that though I had been sick short while before, and that the weather was very bad, yet was I kept from any prejudice, and came the day before that of my appearance to Edinburgh in good health, and my surety with me. And the day of my appearance happened to be the next day or second after the Earl of Argyll's escape, which did much put them in a bad humour.

The council was surprised (as it seemed to me) when I appeared: and after some astonishment and silence, an indictment was commanded to be read against me, charging me with preaching in the fields and without authority, and finally charging me with venting of principles that were pernicious, seditious, and rebellious, and tending to alienate the minds of his Majesty's subjects from his government, and therefore ought to be severely punished to the terror of others. The advocate for the king did refer all to my oath. And being commanded by the President to depone whether I had preached any in houses or in fields since I came from the Bass; and a few days respite to answer to the indictment, which I humbly and earnestly sought, in regard that I had a tedious long journey, bad weather, long sickness before, and my spirit disordered, that I could not give so satisfying an answer as otherwise I would, and that I had come but yesterday to town, and had not time to consider the indictment (having never seen the same nor heard it till it was read); I say, this respite being denied, I told them that I was ready to swear that I was innocent of what I was charged with in the indictment, and therefore desired I might have liberty to speak for myself, which was granted. Then did I discourse to them a large half-hour (without being interrupted) in answer to what I was charged with. My design in this was to prevent the torment of their questions, and likewise to state the true grounds of our sufferings, and vindicate myself and others of the imputations laid upon us by our enemies. The sum of what I said was: After hearty and humble thanks returned for the liberty of speaking for myself, I protested, That I endeavoured to discharge what I conceived my duty with as little offence to authority as I could; and that, were the things I was called in question about such as I could come and go upon, relating only to my own person or interest in the world, I should be loath to be heard with their Lordships, but refer myself and these things wholly to their disposal: That I should be short, ingenuous, and clear, in my answer for myself: That to the first and second head of preaching without authority and in the fields, I had acknowledged I had preached, and was neither ashamed or terrified to own this; but that I preached not in the fields since I came out of the Bass, nor yet without authority, seeing I was called by God and such of His servants as I verily did believe had power from Christ for that effect; and, therefore, was the first part of my indictment elided and answered: That as to my preaching seditious principles, I might, with a good conscience, deny it; and because that both myself and others were slandered and defamed as persons of disloyal and anti-magistratical principles, I should therefore give an account of what principles were maintained by myself and them, and what my practices were: That as to doctrines, and dogmatical points, and articles of religion, my faith was contained in, and according to, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; that I was of the reformed Protestant religion, and did approve, and was ready to subscribe to that Confession of Faith in King James his time, and ratified (I supposed) by the present current Parliament: That as to the King's Majesty's authority and power, I acknowledge magistracy an ordinance of God, and the present King's authority, whose subject and servant I was, and obliged to submit to, reverence and esteem, whom, for anything relating to my person or estate, I never was resolved to resist; but how far his power extended, or in what subject it was first placed, or how conveyed, I thought not so much my part as that of lawyers to determine. For the king's power in ecclesiastical matters, I acknowledged the persons of ministers and other ecclesiastical persons subject to him; and that he had a jurisdiction civil, reaching to not only civil but likewise spiritual things, which he was to judge, that so he might, as the nursing-father of the Church, either encourage, or punish, or restrain in a coercive way, and that not implicitly, relying on the judgment of, or seeing with others' eyes; and that he might call synods when and where he pleased, and propose his mind to them, whose duty it not only was, but wisdom, to take the magistrate's concurrence when it might be had; but that it was undeniable this power of the magistrate's was not privative of any intrinsical power of the Church, granted to her by Christ, for preserving and edifying of herself; which, therefore, in case of the magistrate's opposition to the truth, or want of access to him through distance of place or other casual emergencie's they might exercise without him, as was clearly seen in the times of the Heathen, Arian, and Roman emperors. That as to the government of the Church, it was true that I did not close with that form of government by archbishops and bishops now established in the kingdom, and therefore could never concur with or submit to the same any manner of way; but whatever my dissatisfaction therewith was, or opposition thereto, I never opposed it but with spiritual weapons. And as for my practice, I can say, I have endeavoured to keep a good conscience, both before God and men, to live unblameable and peaceably, giving "to God what was God's, and to Cesar what was Cesar's;" was never in any insurrection, rebellion, or conspiracy against his Majesty's person or goverment, nor never stirred up others thereto, but rather to live peaceably, and by repentance, reformation, testimony for God, quietness and confidence, and other spiritual means, to expect deliverance; not by irritating of the rulers, to make their bonds heavier, by taking the sword, and resisting by force; and this both publicly in sermons and privately in discourses. These, therefore, being our principles, which we are not ashamed of, but ready to defend, it is a wonder to me how I or any sober person of our way come to be challenged for seditious principles and practices, or charged with them. If these principles be innocent, then is the second and great part of my libel, referred to my oath, elided. And, finally, I prayed the Lord to bless his Majesty with all His blessings, both spiritual and temporal; that he might be a terror to evil-doers, an encouragement to the good; that the throne might be established in righteousness.

After this discourse, to which they hearkened very patiently, I was asked, Whether I preached since I came out of the Bass? To which I replied, I would answer to what I was charged with in my libel or indictment, which was not that I preached, but that I preached without authority, and seditiously; which I did deny. They inquired me very earnestly and pressingly, Who ordained me? I told them, I could not be free to tell them, seeing it concerned others whom I was not to stage; but that I had lawful and good authority, and that their Lordships could not compel me to answer to that matter: nor judged I myself bound to answer thereto, because it was *res hactenus judicata*, for which

I was formerly questioned, and satisfied the law for; and, therefore, could not now again be called in question for the same fault. And, seeing that my commission to preach was before the act of grace, any crime therein (if any was) was by the act of grace purged: and, besides, the same not being in my indictment, I was not bound to answer thereto. I was removed; and after some debate among themselves (for many of the counsellors were much taken with my discourse and defence I made, and voted that I might be let go), the matter being left to the bishops, I was called in, and received the following sentence: To be sent to prison to Blackness, and to continue there until I paid the fine of five thousand merks, and give security not to preach any more, or go off the kingdom. And my guard was ready to convey me to be sent to the common jail of Edinburgh, and there to remain.

Many of the bystanders (for there were multitudes there) were surprised at the severity of the sentence; yea, some of the privy council talked publicly, that I had met with hard measure. Well, I came to the jail, and had a chamber the best in the prison; the keeper and under-keepers of the prison of Edinburgh were very discreet and civil; I had abundance of visits every day from some good people and persons of quality. When I first came, I examined my ways and carriage, and found matter both of humiliation and thanksgiving unto the Lord: I saw ground to bless God that I vindicated the Lord's people from the aspersions cast upon them of bad principles; I boldly and freely, to the conviction of all, owned our principles; and I likewise desired not only to speak for myself, but to honour God; I saw ground of humiliation for many failings in me, which did confound me; yet was glad if the Gospel did not receive prejudice by me. I got little good done; for I ordinarily slept till seven in the morning; and after supper, which was at eight o'clock, I was drowsy; and all day over I was diverted with visits: yet I got my speech written, and some letters, and preached twice every Lord's day to the prisoners, and some few who were suffered to come in. Twice did I supplicate for my liberty while I was in Edinburgh, but could not obtain it, because of the bishops and the clerk of the council, the bishop's brother, who was my great enemy, though I never disobliged him in my lifetime.

After I had continued six weeks in Edinburgh, I was sent to Blackness, convoyed by four or five gentlemen of the guard, where I continued seven weeks. Ignorance, youth, and fear of man, made the governor of this place not so discreet as otherwise he would be to me. For, first, he kept me in a manner a close prisoner; another had still the key of my chamber, though I could command him to come and open it when I pleased, and which was not according to the council's order. Next, he would be frequently drunk, and then was guilty of some extravagancies; he likewise kept back many of my friends from coming to see me, which did pique me at him: and the first night he was so indiscreet, as to put me into a gousty, cold, wide, dark, filthy, smoky room, where I could not have lived six days, if I had therein continued, for smoke, darkness, melancholy, and cold, although at the same time he had better rooms; but his lady, though a child not above fourteen years, and another gentleman that came along with me, prevailed so far with him as to change my room, and then was I very well. Here I continued seven weeks, doing little good, but longing and praying for deliverance out of that sad place, which the Lord thus brought to pass. My brother-in-law, unknown to me, presented a supplication to the council in my behalf, desiring my fine might be remitted, myself ordered to be set at liberty, some competent time allowed me to settle my affairs in Scotland, seeing I was content to submit to their Lordships' sentence of banishment. Which supplication (the Duke of York and Bishop with his brother being away and gone to England) was easily granted by the council: an order was sent to the governor of Blackness immediately to set me at liberty; a month was given me to settle my affairs; whereupon I was much sooner than I thought set at liberty, and at a time when I little thought of it, and my liberty burdened with no clog or sinful engagement by my cautioner, who only bound that I should remove out of the kingdom (and not return without king or council's leave) within such a day.

SECTION V.

Of my Banishment.

I did not know anything of what my friends had done for me, nor could blame them for what they had done. The terms were honest upon which I was to come out; liberty was desireable, though in a strange country, and preferable to imprisonment at home. I looked upon wicked folk, though Scotsmen, as the greatest aliens, foreigners, and strangers to me; a godly man in England or Ireland is more my countryman than a wicked Scotsman. Besides, by being at liberty, I should be in greater capacity to glorify the Lord than under restraint, where I could not see a godly person, nor be anywise useful save by a few letters. And I saw much of the mercy of God, that without paying a fine, or engaging to any sinful terms, the council should have given orders for my liberation.

But notwithstanding of all this, when I thought upon my case, banishment was grievous and burdensome to me: shall I leave then (said I) my native country; shall I leave, and never see mother, children, brethren, sisters, and kindly friends and relations, and spend the residue of my days among strangers, to whom I will be as a barbarian? What care will they take of me? how shall I be maintained? Will any little thing, that after payment of debts my estate can spare, be sufficient for me to live upon in a place where all things are at a dear rate? Truly all those considerations, and such like, did make banishment no light thing to bear, and wish that I never had come out of prison, and in my heart to censure and think hardly of these who procured me my liberty; yea, such thoughts would for some whole nights keep me waking.

But, addressing myself to the Lord, and pouring out my troubled soul (as it was ordinary for me to do in such cases) to the Lord, I found that this storm calmed; and the consideration of God's providence over and propriety in all places, experience of former favours, and especially that word, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life," did sweetly stay my heart. And being made and called of God to wander from my fathers house, and land of my nativity, to a land God would show me, I laboured to fit myself for my journey, and to "take up my cross:" and the Lord so blest my endeavours, as in a short time I settled all my civil affairs, and was ready to come away at the time prefixed.

So as, leaving Scotland and all friends there, I directed my course for London about the latter end of May 1682; and after some stops, and dangers by sea, I safely arrived there June 16th 1682. My voyage was much alleviated, by the company of another countryman who came alongst with me, whose company was much satisfying to me. I brought not above twenty pounds of silver and gold with me to London, but the Lord I found was with me in all places where I was driven; for I had both meat and wages. I did resolve, indeed, as sensible of my own weakness, to forbear preaching, and any public work; as likewise, to settle myself after long and great tossings, to improve, in a private abstract station, my spiritual condition. But God did thwart this; for the more I endeavoured this way, the worse I became: and likewise, at the same time, I had calls to preach at several places, some of which I closed with, and found more of spiritual good and advantage to my soul than in private exercises. Wherefore I resolved to follow that way, and did every night preach and pray in a private family, where some five or six neighbours at night did ordinarily resort; every Lord's day I preached to a gathered church in fellowship with Mr C., from whom I had ten shillings for every sermon; at other times I likewise preached to others, but freely. And truly the Lord gave me to find both great favour and respect from the English, and more than many others did, and whom I found to be as genteel, tender-hearted, and generous people as ever I conversed with. Some of them I found very notional, and much taken up with fancies, dreams, and singular opinions: of these I found some favourable at the beginning; but despairing to gain me to their opinion, and finding the aversion of my heart to these fancies, they became my enemies, and did labour to break my reputation as much as they could. I lived the first seven months upon my own charges for all things; but afterwards I had a call from a widow-gentlewoman to stay in her family, to pray and sometimes exhort and preach. From her I had lodging and diet free, and in whose house I prayed, read, and expounded Scripture twice a-day; and thus continued till the 21st of July 1683, that I was apprehended, and imprisoned in Newgate for six months, for refusing the Oxford oath.

SECTION VI.

Of my third imprisonment.

Upon the 20th or 21st July 1683, about the time that a plot against the king's person and government was discovered, and some three or four days after my Lord Russel's execution; at ten o'clock I was expeding a certain business with a gentleman in Cheapside, and one Mr A., one of the king's messengers, searching for suspected persons in that very house where I was, and particularly for one Mr Sands, meeting me as I came down, and knowing me to be a stranger, and suspecting me as some disaffected person, did presently secure me by a constable, and brought me to his own house, kept me a close prisoner some five or six hours, and thereafter brought me before some of the council: there were the king, the Duke of York, L.K., L.S., and some others I know not. After some frivolous immaterial questions relating to my nation, and when I came here, where I lodged, and some others of that nature, I was asked, What I knew or heard of a plot against his majesty at any time? I replied, That I knew nothing of a plot against his majesty's person or government, nor heard anything but what was discovered since that plot did break out, nor knew nor heard anything I could make them the wiser by; that I was no public person, nor frequenter of cabals or coffee-houses; that I know not any one person, either accusers or accused, in that plot; that I always lived peaceably, and was never accessory to any plot or insurrection that ever was; that in my judgment (which I declared) I was against all violent attempts against his majesty or government; and that it was not likely any who had such designs, knowing my principles, would communicate ought to me of it; yea, that I always shunned discourses of that nature. Thereafter I was asked by his majesty, What I judged of the Archbishop of St Andrew's murder, whether I judged it so or not? I answered, That for myself I had no accession thereto, but was very grieved when I heard it; and I would not justify or have had any hand in it for the whole world: so for me to condemn it as (and to declare it) murder, was I not free: for being a doer of the law only, and not a judge of the law, I conceived it as out of my sphere to give judgment of another person's actions, whether they were murderers or not: that this I confessed belonged to his majesty and officers of justice, who were judges of the law, but to me it did not; especially being a stranger to the fact, and legal evidences of the nature, manner, and circumstances of the same not being adduced, it was hard for me or any person to give judgment one way or other of the said fact. And for my thoughts of it, that God had appointed a solemn court at the last day for judging of actions, words, and thoughts, before which court alone it was competent (I thought) to give account of thoughts; and, therefore, referring myself as to my thoughts to that court only, I was not free to give account to any human judicatory whatever of them; to whom yet I heartily submitted in the expressions and actions to be judged. And, finally, Though I was not afraid his majesty knew what were my thoughts in the matter, yet would not be a precedent to any of his subjects to be made to give an account of thoughts judicially, especially relating to other persons; and, therefore, to have me excused. Then the king was pleased to ask me, Whether I judged myself bound by the solemn league and covenant? and whether I thought there was anything of moral obligation therein? I answered, that for my part, I never took that covenant, nor was it ever tendered to me; but what was of moral import in it, I judged I was bound thereto, although I myself never took it; and that, however, the words of the decalogue and the covenant were not the same, yet might the covenant, be reduced to it, as materially the same with the decalogue: that I remembered two chief articles of the covenant, the one was "reformation of our hearts and lives according to the Word of God;" and this I thought might be easily reduced to every precept of the decalogue, each of which tied us to reformation and repentance. Another article I conceived to be in the covenant was, That we should "maintain and defend the king's just privileges, his person, and government;" and this, as I judged, might easily be reduced to the decalogue; so did I judge myself by the Word of God, laws of the land, yea, and covenant itself, though never taken by me personally, bound to. After this I was asked some questions concerning my acquaintance with several persons, as Mr Fergusson, the Cesnocks, Mr Munro, Mr Baillie of Jerviswood, and others; to which I gave a true, full, ingenuous answer, and was after commanded to remove. What were their thoughts of me, I know not; but it seems they were satisfied I was not in the plot, nor could tell them ought of it, and that I dealt ingenuously with them; and yet were not willing to let me go so, but referred me to the lord mayor, and ordered him to put the oath of allegiance, supremacy, and Oxford oath to me.

The next day, therefore, I appeared before the lord mayor, and was much grieved and troubled that my trials should be stated on the oaths of allegiance and supremacy: for I had neither clearness to take them both, especially the oath of supremacy; nor yet was I so willing to suffer upon the account of refusing them, as being a dark case to me. But, when the messenger told me I was ordered to take the three oaths, my heart was very glad, as being very clear to suffer for refusing the Oxford oath; wherein a man is bound, besides other things, not to endeavour to make any alteration in the government either in state or church, which I thought hard to swallow. Wherefore, when asked by my lord mayor, whether I would take the said oaths, after I had asked whether Queen Elizabeth's explication might be read to me, and proposed some reasons why I conceived myself not bound by law to take the said oaths, and overruled therein; at last my answers did issue in this, That as for the oath of allegiance, I was willing to take it, so that it would end the strife; for the oath of supremacy I demurred upon it, until I advised better; and for the Oxford oath, I *simpliciter* refused it presently: but, if I had not benefit by the oath of allegiance, I would take none of them at all; and in the meantime desired, if they committed me, to do it upon refusing the Oxford oath: which carried by the Lord mayor's indulgence, and Sir J. E., who spake in my favours very much against the common serjeant's mind, who pressed much that I should be committed for refusing all the oaths. So an order was drawn, and I sent to Newgate.

In Newgate I continued six lunary months, or twenty-four weeks. Here I had experience of the Lord's goodness and mercy, which did never leave me. I had, short while after I came, one of the best rooms in the prison, in which any person might lodge; a large, cleanly, lightsome, square room it was, and off the ground as ye come in. The captain and under-keepers were all very civil to us, carrying both wisely and discreetly. I kept my health very well all the time I was there. We had comfortable fellowship with fellow-prisoners, who might see one another all day; some I perceived notional, unlearned, yet obstinate. I stood at the greatest distance with free-willers; but such as I had greatest converse with were those of our own persuasion, who were truly the most sober and learned that were there. In general, I found all of them civil. We were abundantly refreshed and supplied by numbers of all ranks and persuasions (save Quakers) that came in to see us. We wanted nothing. So that I could hardly call it suffering. Only this was sad to us, and which made me desirous to be gone and at liberty, that (1), We had no occasion of doing good to others, for we preached none while there; for we were not suffered, nor others to come in to us. (2) It was grievous to me especially, that I had no occasions nor opportunities for retirement; for having a chamber-fellow with me, and all day oppressed with visitants, I could not in the twenty-four hours command one for myself. Wherefore I did little or no good here, and got as little; only I gave my testimony for Christ, and had experience of the Lord's goodness. When the number of my weeks were fulfilled, I was without further work put at liberty, the turnkey getting word only from the captain to set me at liberty, and let me out when I pleased. So taking my leave of the captain, and thanking him for his civilities, I came out; my expenses in all not reaching above twenty pounds.

SECTION VII.

Observations upon my sufferings.

(1) That such as will live godly in the world must and will suffer persecution, for the trial and exercise of their faith and patience, purging away of their dross, and for weaning their hearts from a present world, and for confirmation of the truth, 2 Tim. iii. 12; 1 Pet. iv. 12; John

xv. 3. (2) Although at some times there will be more or less of persecution, yet there is no time in which the saints shall be without daily crosses; for a wicked world will persecute with the tongue, even in Abraham's family where piety did obtain, Gal. iv. 28, 29; Gen. xxi. 9. Even when religion was favoured, I found persecution by reproach, and contempt of wicked men. (3) There are some special days of persecution, when hell breaks loose, and when great trials come, which are called "the hour of tentation," and "the evil day, the hour and power of darkness," Rev. iii. 10; Eph. vi. 13; Luke viii. 13, 22, 25. (4) The Lord "stayeth His rough wind in the day of His east wind," Isa. xxvii. 8. He many times puts an end to the extremities of His people's personal trials ere He exercises with public sufferings; He "lays not on men more than is meet," and therefore suffers not a multitude of evils to lie upon His poor people at once, 1 Cor. x. 10. (5) God first (I find) ordinarily exercises with personal afflictions, ere He call them to sufferings on account of Christ, that, being exercised with the one, they may better bear the other. (6) I find that the Lord doth many times affright us with troubles which never come upon us, as He did to Nineveh; and we are made to fear that which the mercy of God never suffers to touch us, Jonah i. 3. (7) But seldom or never doth a great personal or public stroke come upon the Lord's people, but He gives them some warning, and notice of it beforehand, that we be not surprised, but prepared for it, Zeph. ii. 1, 2, 3, 4. (8) Obstinacy in sin and impenitency, and the removing of God's precious people, with security under this, have had greatest influence upon my fears of a day of desolation, Isa. lvii. 12; Ezek. xi. 3, 4; Isa. ix. 4, 5. (9) Our fears, unbeliefs, and discouragements, with our confusions, are our greatest troubles in a day of trouble; it is a prison within a prison, Psal. cxlii., "O bring my soul out of trouble." Our galled sore backs make our burdens more grievous to us—sin and unbelief are bad ballast in a storm. (10) The cross of Christ, when we once engage with it, is nothing so terrible, is nothing so heavy as at a distance in apprehension it is. How dreadful did a prison and appearing before synagogues appear to me! But, when I did encounter therewith, I found it nothing so terrible to me. (11) I was never in that trouble yet upon the account of Christ, but I was delivered out of it by the Lord, and that when it seemed very desperate to look for salvation, Psal. xxxiv. 19, "The troubles of the righteous are many, but the Lord delivereth out of them all." We are to believe deliverance from all our troubles, though we cannot tell when or how. (12) Nothing contributes more to a Christian carriage under trouble, than faith of God's support in and deliverance out of trouble, James v. 7, 8. Unbelief sinks the heart. (13) It is matter of great humiliation to us, that our troubles and afflictions do us but little good sometimes, that we are so unfruitful under the rod: and especially I observe, that small troubles have but small influence; every physic doth not work with strong constitutions. My lighter troubles, whether upon a personal or more public account, I found but little good by them. It was a deep heart-reaching stroke that did me good: and in times of greatest fears, sharpest afflictions, it was ever still best with me; and at first afflictions do not so much good, it is afterwards that they reap "the peaceable fruits of righteousness," Heb. xii. And, even when the Lord blesses them to do good, the fruit, alas! is but small; we are not so good under them as we ought to be or might. (14) I have observed, the more the Lord's people are afflicted and persecuted, the more they grow; and the Gospel never thrives better than when it is persecuted, Exod. i. 12; Phil. i. 12. Such things as happened to me have been "for the furtherance of the Gospel." All the malice of men could never have broken us, if we had not undone ourselves; they "plowed with our heifer:" for the spreading of the Gospel was the effect of a long time of their greatest severities. (15) Persecutors are ungodly, are cruel, are deceitful; and this did I see evidently, all persecutors have these three properties: and therefore let us beware of such persons, and keep at the utmost distance with them, and expect no good from them; let us not lean on them who smite us; let us suspect all their favours, for "the kisses of an enemy are deceitful;" but let "our eyes be only to the Lord." (16) Too great love, respect to, intimacy and communion with wicked men, and not standing at due distance with them, provokes the Lord to give His people into the hands of the wicked. The Israelites' wicked confederacy with the Canaanites made them "briers and thorns in their sides;" had we carried to the ungodly as we ought to have done, we should not have smarted as we do this day. (17) It is a very great comfort to a godly person, that his persecutors and enemies are God's enemies, and wicked persons: "Let my enemies be as the wicked," saith Job. We may expect good hearing from God against them. It doth much likewise to determine us in our duties, that what they are for must be ill, and what they are against must be good: and, notwithstanding of the confidence of some compliers, it is strange that in almost six thousand years one instance from Scripture or authentic history cannot be given. (18) Under public sufferings we are mostly called to submission and patience, both in reference to God and men: "In patience possess your souls;" and to Christian cheerfulness. Oh, what a comely thing is it to see a meek sufferer, like the Master, "not opening His mouth," but "dumb as a sheep is before the shearer!" And how ordinarily do men fall in this great sin of impatience? And cheerfulness under the cross of Christ is no less beautiful; and, therefore, how frequent such precepts and examples, to "glory, rejoice in tribulation?" for this gives a good report of Christ, His cause and cross to others. (19) Sufferings on public accounts are not only our duty, but our great priviledge; to suffer for Christ is one of Christ's love-gifts, Phil. i. ult., "It is given you to suffer for the name of Christ." To give testimony for Christ and His truth is our greatest honour. A sufferer and witness for Christ is the most honourable person and officer in the kingdom of Christ; it is Christ's highest and honourablest employment, Acts v., "They rejoiced they were counted worthy to suffer shame for Christ." (20) Reproach and shame, and ill-will of men, is the heaviest of Christ's crosses to bear: "Reproach hath broken my heart," saith David. (21) It is the great guilt of professors this day, that they not only shun the ways of God, but are ashamed of them, and of the cross of Christ, yea, and of the truths of Christ; of such will Christ be ashamed. (22) It is a very hard matter to get our sufferings stated upon Christ's account, but yet it is very necessary we get it done; for many objections doth a poor suffering soul meet with in this case, as possibly not so clear to many as the matter of the sufferings of Christians under Heathens, and of Protestants under Papists. Nor is the call to such a thing clear at such a time; some sinful accession of our own (through want of consideration or mistake) to our trouble, sense of guilt and unworthiness, doth render our cause dark to us many times. That as it was said of these, "Ye did not fast to Me," so may it be said of us, Ye suffer not to Me, nor for Me, but for your sins and yourselves. (23) Outward trouble from the hands of persecutors may be both a rod and correction for sin, and a testimony for Christ and His truth. The Lord Jesus may by one rod design both the correction and chastisement of His Church and people, and likewise design a confirmation and witness to His truth, cause, and work. Heb. xii. 12, the public sufferings of the believing Hebrews were "chastisements for our profit." (24) We by our sins, therefore, may provoke the Lord to deliver us into the hands of men, and by our weakness we may have some sinful hand and occasion thereto, and great failings attending our sufferings; and yet Christ accept of our sufferings, so maimed as a testimony for Him. (25) Whatever pretext wicked persecutors make of afflicting God's people, and that they be schismatic, scandalous, seditious, that they walk disorderly; yet the true ground of their quarrel is because of their enmity to God and godliness; and, therefore, we may be assured we suffer for Christ and for His cause: "All these things will they do unto you, because the love of the Father is not in them." And David saith, that all his enemies' quarrel with him was, "because he followed after that which was good." It is the enmity that is between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, Gen. iii. 15; Matth. xxiii. 33; John xv. 19, 21. (26) I observe, that the Lord doth accept of the faithful ends and endeavours, and honest intention and zeal of His people, when the methods and particular means and courses they take for witnessing for Christ are sometimes not altogether justifiable; as he who scruples through want of light an oath in itself lawful, out of zeal for the glory of God which he fears by taking this oath he wrongs, and thereupon suffers, this man's sufferings are accepted of Christ as a testimony for Him. (27) The controversy this day is as manifestly stated betwixt Christ and the devil, sin and godliness, whether the world should be Christ's subjects, or the devil's and sin's subjects, as ever it was. The smaller differences, though in themselves of no great consequence, yet centre in this great gulf of rebellion against God. To touch anything belonging to this wicked generation, Christ's stated enemies, or to have ought ado with them, is dangerous, Numb. xvi. 26; and they are the emissaries of Satan, and doing his work, who plead for union and compliance with them. (28) Yet ought not the miscarriages of superiors dissolve the civil or natural bonds of relation to them, Matth. xxiii. 1, 2. We are to do, and be submissive to, the commands of superiors, though we be not to imitate their practice. (29) Man's wrath, and all persecution, shall tend and work to the praise of God and the good of saints, Psal. lxxvi. 10; Isa. xxxi. 9, and this is a marvellous consolation. (30) Many a time may we, in a public stroke of persecution, see our sin and guilt clearly and legibly written, as in Adonibezek, Judges i.; Gen. xix. Such as burned with unnatural lust to one another are justly consumed with fire from heaven: and it is just that lovers, whom we preferred to Christ, be the instruments of our greatest trouble. (31) Many times do the people of God find great favour and kindness at the hands of natural men, yea, and more sometimes than from the truly godly: the earth helped the woman many times. I found some professors of religion stood at greater distance with me, than did mere natural and graceless persons. (32) The preservation of some, of a remnant in a day of straits, is exceeding wonderful and marvellous sometimes. (33) "The wicked are snared in the work of their own hands," Psal. ix., and Hamans hanged on their own gallows. The Lord makes the weapons of the wicked recoil on themselves; every mean for a good while they take in hand doth but weaken them, and increase the other party. (34) It is the people of God that only can undo and harm themselves; and it is by division that it is done: while we stood in one spirit, we could not be overcome or prevailed against; but false brethren crept in amongst us, divided and broke us through the subtilty of adversaries, and did draw us to rash enterprises. (35) The greatest consolations do attend the greatest tribulations, 2 Cor. i. 5, 6. (36) The first brunt of the cross is saddest and sharpest: "No affliction for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous." (37) Great outward troubles, whether personal or on public accounts, quicken and revive our apprehensions of eternity. (38) And always do us good; though not alike good to all, nor so sensibly, yet no cross but we get some good of it. (39) I found it very hard to appear before councils, and carry rightly. We seek rather to save ourselves in any lawful way, than to honour and give testimony for Christ; and there is not boldness and dependence on Christ for assistance. (40) There is not so much of the "Spirit of glory resting upon" sufferers as hath been formerly: which I think flows from these three: (1) That our testimony for Christ is not so glorious; (2) That a sadder shock is coming; and, *lastly*, That our sufferings are so moderate. (41) Yet, blessed be the Lord, for my part I have found the Lord in a special way with me in all my sufferings, and I never repent of anything I have suffered for Christ. (42) Though the Lord can sanctify and bless any lot to His people, yet, to speak absolutely, an afflicted condition in the world is best for God's people. (43) The infinite condescendence of God and His gracious and tender nature, is that only which can be a bottom to our faith; to believe we suffer for Christ, and as such to be accepted and looked upon by Him. (44) There is a large allowance for sufferers for righteousness; but many live not upon their allowance, and therefore look so ill upon it.

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